

★ MAYOR ★  
**MARTIN J. WALSH**

**BOSTON**2014  
TRANSITION COMMITTEE



# Reports from Issues Working Groups for Mayor Martin J. Walsh's Transition Team

April 16, 2014

## Reports from Working Groups for Mayor Martin J. Walsh's Transition Team

On November 5th, 2013, the people of Boston elected Martin J. Walsh to be their mayor, marking the first change of administration in twenty years.



Photo: Mike Ritter

Mayor-elect Martin J. Walsh at the Open Town Meeting, December 14, 2013

Within days, Mayor-elect Walsh launched his transition effort to lay a foundation for the effective implementation of his plans and vision, and to ensure the continued smooth operation of the day-to-day functions of government. Just as importantly, Mayor-elect Walsh saw the two months between his election and assumption of office as a unique opportunity to reach out and listen, to convene a structured and specific discussion about municipal government and

how it can best serve our city.

The report that follows is one outcome of that civic dialog.

To this end, Mayor-elect Walsh assembled a team of more than 250 practitioners, experts, community leaders, and end-users organized into twelve issue-specific “Working Groups.”

Overseen by two group leaders and, in most cases, one or two transition co-chairs, each Working Group drew from a wide range of backgrounds and

experiences. Overall the Working Groups’ membership included half individuals of color and half women, with all members deeply connected to Boston by virtue of residing and/or working in the city.

Each Working Group was tasked with examining one of Mayor-elect Walsh’s key thematic concerns and developing a menu of ideas and proposals representing possible ways to advance that goal. The concerns

posed to each group were kept broad by design so that all members could contribute. Discussions and this report followed a framework of “Keep, Implement, Dream.”

“Keep:” A policy or program that the City of Boston is already doing which should be maintained.

“Implement:” A policy, program or idea that the city is not currently doing which could be realized without requiring major new funding or legislative changes.

“Dream:” A policy, program or idea that could be transformative but which would likely require a longer time horizon to achieve.

The twelve Working Groups and their areas of focus were: Arts and Culture; Basic City Services; Economic Development; Education; Energy, Environment and Open Space; Housing; Human Services; Intergovernmental Relations; Public Health; Public Safety; Transportation and Infrastructure; and Youth. Groups had between 18 to 35 members each, with every group meeting at least three times during December 2013 and, in some cases early January 2014, and all (except for Intergovernmental Relations) hosting at least one issue-specific public hearing.

To ensure even greater public participation, Mayor-elect Walsh hosted a city-wide Town Hall meeting, drawing over 1,000 people to Roxbury Community College on a snowy Saturday, December 14, 2013. Eleven Working Groups conducted two sessions each, at which any interested Boston resident or stakeholder was given an opportunity to speak. At the end of the day, the group leaders presented a consensus report to Mayor-elect Walsh, and the audience participated in a robust Q & A.

By late January, each Working Group had produced a report setting out ideas and recommendations arising from its discussions and public sessions. It was not expected or required that full consensus exist on every item or that reports be rigidly prescriptive. (And as with any collective effort, it would be incorrect to ascribe every mention or recommendation contained

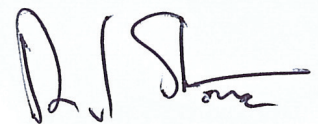
here as necessarily being the viewpoint of every member of a Working Group, or the transition effort as a whole, or Mayor Walsh.) Nonetheless, these reports speak to ideas and policies that found significant group support or seemed especially innovative. (Note: Some members of the Basic City Services group decided to produce two additional papers, focusing in detail on the city’s Inspectional Services Department and the issue of Animal Care, and these individuals’ efforts are included here as well.)

The transition’s Working Groups process culminated in February 2014, with a series of twelve face-to-face meetings at City Hall. In sessions of between 90 minutes and two hours each, members and leaders of all 12 groups met with Mayor Walsh, his relevant cabinet and departmental leadership, and his mayoral policy team to present the results of their discussions, public hearings, and recommendations. At these meetings, Mayor Walsh made clear his hope and expectation that discussions undertaken in the Working Groups, and collegial relationships formed there between members and City Hall, ought to continue. Indeed, since that time, several of the people in working groups have been tapped for city boards, commissions, and advisory councils.

In presenting this report to the residents of Boston we would like to thank once again all those who participated in the transition process, whether as Co-Chairs, Working Group members and leaders, public meeting attendees, staff, or volunteers.



Joyce Linehan  
Co-chair



David Stone  
Executive Director

April 16, 2014



## Mayor Martin J. Walsh's Transition Team Co-chairs

- Felix Arroyo, Chief of Health and Human Services, City of Boston
- John Barros, Chief of Economic Development, City of Boston
- Katherine Craven, Chief Administrative Officer for Babson College
- Joyce Linehan, Chief of Policy, City of Boston
- Dr. James Mandell, Attending Physician, Boston Children's Hospital
- Charlotte Golar Richie, Former State Representative
- Sam Tyler, President, Boston Municipal Research Bureau
- Paul Watanabe, Director, Institute for Asian American Studies; Associate Professor of Political Science, College of Liberal Arts, UMass Boston
- Beth Williams, President and CEO, Roxbury Technology, LLC

Organizational titles and affiliations are provided for identification purposes only.

# Special Thanks to:

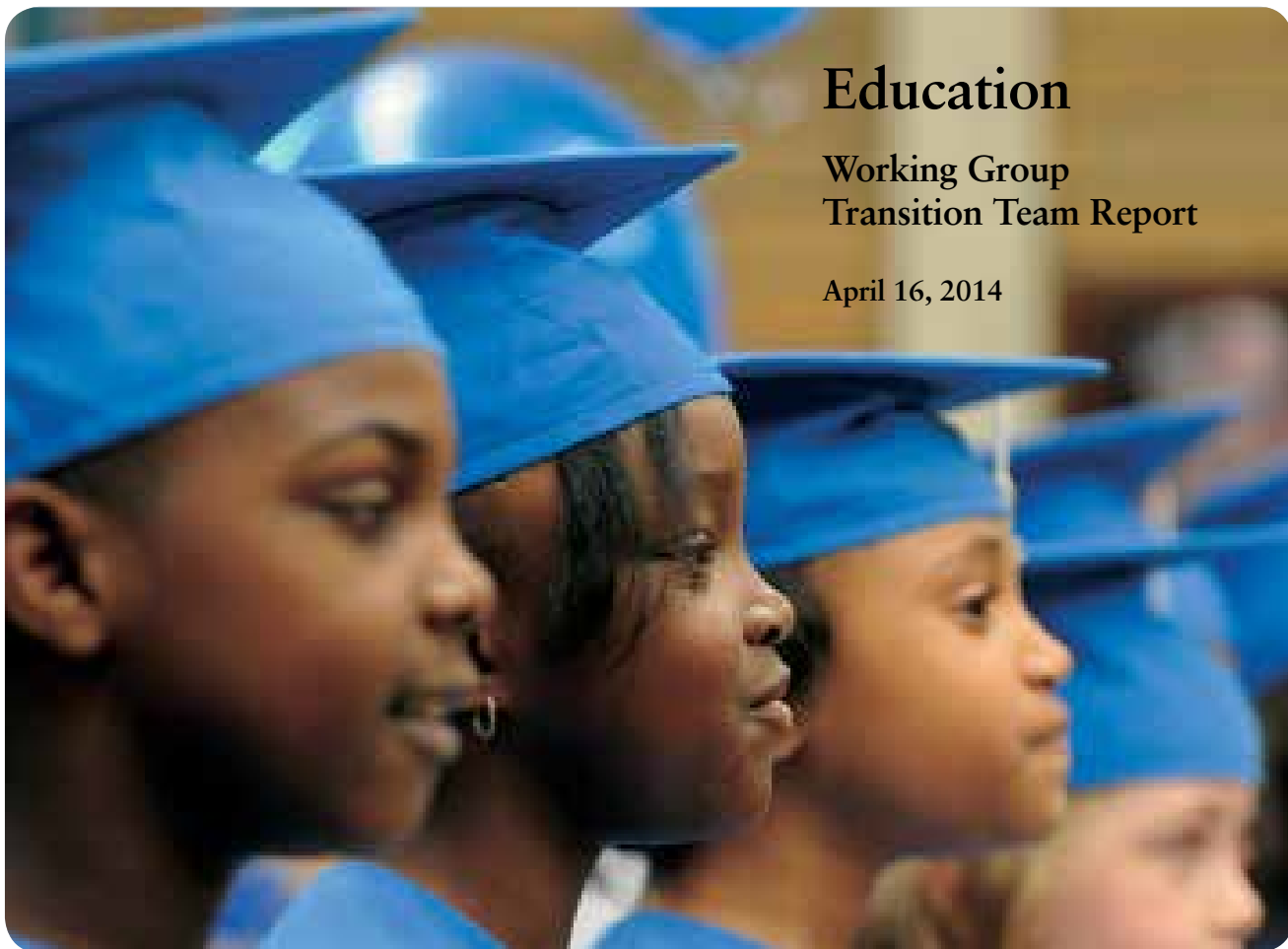
- All of the Co-chairs and Members of the 12 Working Groups for their time, wisdom, and collaboration.
- The staff of the Transition Team for Mayor Martin J. Walsh.
- Harvard Kennedy School's Rappaport Institute for Greater Boston for managing the Open Town Meeting.
- Boston Public Library, The Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers, The English High School, the Haitian Multi-Service Center, Madison Park Technical Vocational High School, John D. O'Bryant School of Math & Science, Old South Meeting House, Old South Church, and Roxbury Community College and their staffs for hosting meetings and public events during the transition.
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## Education

Working Group  
Transition Team Report

April 16, 2014

Photo: Richard Howard and the Boston Foundation



Photos: Erin Murphy





“What can Boston city government do—whether by itself or in partnership with others—to help make Boston a national leader in closing the achievement gap?”

## INTRODUCTION

Boston’s continued prosperity and quality of life is dependent on the vitality and viability of its public education system. Boston Public Schools (BPS) is a national leader among urban school districts, and continues to make progress in reducing its number of dropouts and in graduating students prepared for success in college and careers. Still, too many students are not successful and not every Boston school is a quality school that serves students and their families.

Mayor Walsh asked, “What can Boston city government do—whether by itself or in partnership with others—to help make Boston a national leader in closing the achievement gap? The Boston Public Schools is likely at the heart of this discussion, but feel free to interpret the question broadly to include other parts of

city government and partnerships between the city and private or institutional entities.”

## THE PROCESS

Mayor Walsh’s Education Working Group listened to the opinions of hundreds of participants in the Open Town Hall Meeting and Public Hearing. It received testimonies and discussed ways that Boston city government, working with BPS, can help make Boston a national leader in closing achievement gaps among groups of students.

BPS’s intention to close achievement gaps is well established and clear. In 2006, the Boston School Committee adopted an achievement gap policy that, in part, states that all its “... policies and practices will reflect the goals of eliminating achievement gaps and achieving academic proficiency, explicitly, and emphatically. By purpose and design, the district will advance these goals by developing cultural competence, ensuring uniformly high expectations, promoting rigorous curricula, differentiating instruction, and maximizing access for all students to high-level educational opportunities. Given the urgency of this mission, the district is committed to developing a diverse cadre of educators and administrators, ensuring proper emphasis on culturally responsive service delivery, and rigorously examining and monitoring policies, programs, practices, and written documents to ensure that these goals are implemented.”

## THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Mayor’s Education Working Group offers

the following recommendations to the mayor to strengthen the achievement gap policy implementation:

- Review all policies and recommendations to determine whether they close or eliminate the achievement gap. An Achievement/Opportunity Gap statement should accompany every policy and operational proposal.
- Review and implement the achievement gap policy plan, which addresses many important areas, including hiring and cultural competency. Hire with an emphasis on diversity, seeking to hire and recruit more educators of color. Teachers and administrators should receive cultural proficiency trainings.
- Provide senior level leadership and resources for the implementation of the Achievement Gap Policy Plan. Teachers and administrators should receive cultural proficiency training.
- Revise the district’s zero tolerance policies with the goal of keeping students in school.

BPS cannot close achievement gaps alone. Mayor Walsh has identified five priority areas that require intergovernmental, community, foundation, nonprofit, and business collaboration to achieve short- and long-term strategic initiatives. The five priority areas—early childhood education, high school reform, special education, facilities planning, and charter schools—require citywide attention and responses. For each area, the Education Working Group offers recommendations to Mayor Walsh about practices and initiatives to keep in place, to implement in the short-term and to guide vision for the future. Citywide support on each will contribute to closing achievement gaps.





## FOCUS 1: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Recent studies show the achievement gap is clearly evident for disadvantaged children as early as age 18 months. The key to closing in on this gap is to start with our youngest children. One way to do this is to close

the experience, opportunity, and readiness gaps that lead to the achievement gap in the earliest years.

The research is overwhelmingly clear that high-quality early childhood education programs provide a strong return on investment—they are valuable for children, families, and the prosperity of the city. Over the years, the BPS and community-based programs and providers have worked together to raise the quality of all the city’s early childhood programs serving children from birth to kindergarten. With the recent spotlight on universal pre-k and the specific needs of serving 4-year-olds, more work needs to be done to ensure that every child has access to a high-quality, affordable, accessible K1 seat in a public/private mixed delivery system. In addition, the plan should meet families’ needs for such affordable programs, before and after school care, and accessible care choices. Toward that goal, our recommendations are as follows:

### KEEP

- 1) Expand and bolster Thrive in 5 so it can become a citywide model for catalyzing partners across sectors and neighborhoods into a school readiness movement that will ensure Boston’s future prosperity for generations to come.
- 2) Keep and expand early learning centers, Play-to-Learn groups, and other projects and programs, like Smart From the Start, which is showing a positive impact on school readiness.

## IMPLEMENT

- 1) Create and convene an Early Ed/K1 Expansion Task Force that includes the BPS, Thrive in 5, funders, universities, and other concerned community partners to develop a concrete plan and timeline for K1 expansion that supports a strong public/private mixed delivery system providing quality early education, well trained teachers, and meets families' needs.
- 2) Continue to observe and monitor the impact of the Boston K1ds and Ready Educator demonstration projects.
- 3) Create an inventory of all existing city-supported early childhood programs supporting children 0-5 that are not in BPS, to quantify the City's existing support to this age group, and engage families in their children's early learning.
- 4) Advocate for federal, state, and local funding to expand children's access to programs and support program quality.

## DREAM

- 1) Create a sustainable model of early education and a comprehensive plan, starting with 4-year olds, but eventually for all children birth to kindergarten entry, that meets family needs for consistent and affordable wrap-around services.

## FOCUS 2: FACILITIES

The BPS's facility problem is growing and impacting its ability to close achievement gaps. K-2 enrollment is projected to

increase by 19% in four years, and overall enrollment is projected to increase by 7%. BPS does not have adequate seats for the projected enrollment of pre-k and elementary students. The population of students with disabilities has increased nearly 8% in the last four years. The population of English language learners has increased more than 8 % in the last four years.

Boston needs more classrooms to accommodate more options for inclusion classes and dual language opportunities in schools closer to home for students with disabilities.

## KEEP

- 1) Maintain a high level of attention and scrutiny on any new building proposals until a facilities plan is implemented.
- 2) Ensure that new, planned construction fully utilizes funding from the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

## IMPLEMENT

- 1) Begin the process to create a strategic long-term facilities plan that identifies the City's needs in terms of schools, facilities, and athletic facilities district-wide, and takes into account current and projected populations to identify where empty seats are and where additional



seats are needed.

- 2) Plan for short-term and long-term maintenance of current buildings.

## DREAM

- 1) Have a ten-year facilities plan that invests in school construction and renovation, utilizing state funding to the maximum extent possible.
- 2) All facilities decisions regarding construction or closing of schools should be made with community input and through the lens of equity (using data from an equity impact study), to ensure that all students have access

to quality facilities.

- 3) New buildings can be funded or financed by selling or leasing underutilized facilities and businesses.
- 4) All students should have access to rich reading resources and libraries.
- 5) The city should find an adequate space for an adult learning center.

## FOCUS 3: HIGH SCHOOL REFORM

BPS continues to reduce the dropout rate and increase the number of students prepared for success in college and careers.

Nevertheless, there are significant achievement gaps. Sixteen percent of incoming ninth graders drop out of school before graduation. The dropout age is 21% for English language learners and students with disabilities. Graduation rates are lowest for African American and Latino students; specifically, 35% of entering African American ninth graders and 41% of entering Latino students do not complete high school in four years. Only 75% of graduating students enroll in a two- or four-year college, and of these, only 33% graduate with a two- or four-year degree within six years. On average, 40% of 10th graders at our large district high schools scored needs improvement/warning/failure in English language arts, as did 51% in mathematics. Too many students graduate high school not prepared for high paying, high demand jobs. We can and must do better.

## KEEP

- 1) Continue Success Boston, a partnership focused on helping BPS students persist through college graduation.
- 2) Expand partnerships with community-based organizations, some which are now funded under Weighted Student Funding.
- 3) Continue BPS's reengagement and dropout recovery efforts and programs.
- 4) Increase school to work connections/jobs programs during the year and summer.
- 5) Expand programs that embed college transition programs into the colleges while strengthening the programs to offer services for college readiness directly in high schools.
- 6) Expand GED to college programs.
- 7) Continue targeted preparation classes for the Accuplacer college placement test.



Photo: Chris Supple

## IMPLEMENT

- 1) Create a citywide high school reform task force to set a vision for excellent, community-based high schools that prepare all students for success in college and careers through support for rigorous academic programs as well as career and technical pathways.
- 2) Better engage the business community to link high school college/career pathways with workforce development.
- 3) Implement transition support for high school students after graduation so that they can get through college.
- 4) At Madison Park specifically, better align the academic and vocational education programs. Fully implement the plans to make Madison Park an Innovation School.
- 5) Make Advanced Placement classes available to as many high school students as possible.

## DREAM

- 1) Redesign all high schools to become comprehensive and truly college-prep.
- 2) Make early enrollment at colleges and universities a possibility for more students. Reinstate dual enrollment funding for students.
- 3) Strengthen Career and Technical education, which may require changing some of the rules under which those schools operate.
- 4) Align curricula between middle and high schools, high schools, and colleges, to provide





a more seamless transition for students.

- 5) Engage colleges and universities in a focused conversation. Re-engage colleges and universities as partners with the BPS.
- 6) Begin college-prep programs before high school, as waiting until high school may be too late for many students.
- 7) Increase the number of guidance counselors to support students in identifying and accessing college and career opportunities.

## FOCUS 4: SPECIAL EDUCATION

Recognizing that all students are capable of learning, and each student is capable of maximizing his or her potential within the school setting, it is essential that barriers that interfere with a student's success in school be removed.

In closing the achievement gap, all students, including students with disabilities and English language learners, should have the opportunity to participate within the general education curriculum with accommodations, modifications, and/or support services to support the student's learning style.

## KEEP

- 1) Continue the Special Education Parents Advisory Council (SPED PAC) as an effective participant in BPS SPED decision-making and policy setting.
- 2) Support the Henderson/O'Hearn and other effective inclusion programs, and let them serve as replication models to expand inclusion district-wide.
- 3) Continue the Inclusion Task Force and encourage its important work to continue.

## IMPLEMENT

- 1) Ensure that Individual Education Plans (IEP) are being fully implemented and that the IEP process becomes friendlier and easier for families to understand, access, and participate in effectively, especially for families who do not speak English, have limited education, or face other barriers.
- 2) Reduce the organizational complexity of BPS Special Education programs, services, and practices, and provide information to families regarding the range of available BPS Special Education resources and available placement options most suited to the needs of students with disabilities.

- 3) Look at alternative funding sources, for example health insurances, to ensure that Boston is collecting all of the money that it could to provide wrap-around services and services to students on the autism spectrum.

## DREAM

- 1) Ensure that students with disabilities in inclusion classes and dual language students are able to transition smoothly to high school.
- 2) Seek every opportunity to ensure that students with disabilities should, to the maximum extent appropriate, be educated with and alongside their non-disabled peers.
- 3) Expand the use of successful team models, such as the Henderson/O'Hearn School and Neighborhood House Charter School, where specialists are able to intervene in a proactive way.
- 4) Expand the use of Applied Behavioral Analysis for students with autism spectrum disorders in one-on-one settings, but also generalized in the larger classroom.
- 5) Maintain services for students with disabilities over the summer at the same level offered during the school year.
- 6) Expand the scope of "Special Education" to include wrap-around services that meet the needs of all schoolchildren.
- 7) Tie in public health, clinical, and behavioral health models, so that all schools have nurses and school psychologists.

- 8) Improve transitional services for 14-22 year olds to adulthood.

## FOCUS 5: CHARTER SCHOOLS

Mayor Walsh's vision for Boston is that all of Boston's schools are high quality schools. Ideally, it should not matter whether a quality education is provided in a traditional public, charter, or parochial school.

In reality, however, there is a fierce debate over the proper place of charter schools within Boston's educational framework. Strongly held beliefs among members of the Education Working Group at both ends of the spectrum kept the group from reaching consensus on a set of recommendations for Mayor Walsh. The same level of passion over



Photo: Richard Howard and the Boston Foundation



charter schools was also evident at the Public Hearing and Town Hall break-out sessions.

Members of the public shared many ideas on the subject, including: requiring more public reporting of charter school enrollment and performance data so that parents are better able to make informed decisions about where to send their children; implementing a charter school oversight committee to study what works and what doesn't work in charter schools; looking at the funding mechanism to ensure that resources are equitably allocated between charter and non-charter schools; and commissioning a study on how charter schools and other choice programs have impacted traditional public schools.

Ultimately, the Education Working Group was unable to devote the time necessary to come to a consensus on any of these suggestions. These were

the most contentious issues that the team faced, and it appears that the public is equally split on the question of charter schools.

The Education Working Group recommends continuing the dialogue on charter schools so that all voices can be heard while promoting opportunities for schools to learn from each other. Specifically, we recommend:

### KEEP

- 1) Support and expand the Boston Compact so that traditional district, charter, parochial and private schools are encouraged to collaborate and share best practices to help all of Boston's students succeed.

## IMPLEMENT

- 1) Develop a mechanism for expanding public dialogue on charter schools, whether through a single Town Hall or a series of meetings, in a way that is fair, deliberate, inclusive, and fact-based.
- 2) Develop a strategy to reduce animus between charter school supporters and opponents, evidenced at both the Public Hearing and Town Hall sessions.

## DREAM

- 1) Analyze the ingredients of successful schools in Boston, whether charter or in-district traditional, and share best practices among schools.

## OTHER COMMENTS

The Education Working Group identified four recommendations that appeared consistently across all five areas. They are:

- 1) In choosing a superintendent, it will be important for candidates to demonstrate their commitment and experience in closing achievement gaps and in each of the mayor's five priority areas.
- 2) Address equity among schools. All schools, whether exam, charter, or public, need to be quality schools.

- 3) Strengthen programs and instruction for English language learners at all grade levels, and expand dual language programs.
- 4) Expand resources and opportunities for working with and engaging parents as partners in their children's education.

In addition to the five priority areas, the Education Working Group identified several recommendations that emerged from written and oral testimony and team discussion. The following recommendations are worthy of consideration.

## KEEP

- 1) Maintain strong leadership and innovation from the top.
- 2) Continue the Boston Schoolyard Initiative and outdoor teaching and learning, and invest in outdoor teaching and learning infrastructure.
- 3) Sustain stand-alone middle schools, rather than switching to K-8 or 6-12.
- 4) Increase social and behavioral health services in schools to deal with trauma and family issues.

## IMPLEMENT

- 1) Increase communications among all city departments and agencies that deal with children to facilitate the best possible wrap-around services for all of Boston's students.
- 2) Increase support for robust arts education in schools, including the existing BPS Arts Expansion Initiative and partnership with Boston artists.



- 3) Establish mechanisms for greater parental and student involvement and engagement on a regular basis, perhaps in a Town Hall or other public setting.
- 4) Create partnerships with the Health and Human Services Department to use federal funding to expand behavioral health partnerships.
- 5) Bring together non-profits that work with children and families to figure out how to collaborate more with BPS.
- 6) Make health education resources available for all students, including ELL and LGBTQ.
- 7) Commission an equity study to look at the effects of the new assignment system.

## DREAM

- 1) Consider creating a loan forgiveness program for teachers.
- 2) Extend the school day district-wide.
- 3) Provide opportunities for families to have a real voice in BPS decision-making. Examine other factors, including poverty and homelessness, across city agencies to truly address the achievement gap as it currently exists.
- 4) Establish a strong pipeline of school leaders and principals to make sure that we are constantly developing people.
- 5) Place more emphasis on teaching to the whole child to connect to arts education, sports, and other components of the curriculum that help keep students engaged.
- 6) Create a task force that oversees the impact of the new student assignment process using an equity lens.



Photo: Erin Murphy

## Education Working Group

### Co-chairs

- Dr. George Perry, Jr., Senior Education Policy Advisor to Mayor Walsh, City of Boston
- Jeri Robinson, Vice President of Early Childhood Education, Boston Children's Museum

### Members

- Kevin Andrews, Former Headmaster, Neighborhood House Charter School
- John Barros, Chief of Economic Development, City of Boston and Former Boston School Committee Member

- Claire Barton Sheridan, Principal, Pope John Paul II Catholic Academy, Columbia Campus
- Harneen Chernow, Vice Chair, State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education; Director, 1199 SEIU Training and Upgrading Fund; BPS Parent
- Michael Contompasis, Former BPS Superintendent
- Angela Cristiani, Political Director, Boston Teachers Union; School Psychologist
- Mark Culliton, CEO, College Bound Dorchester
- Richard Doherty, President, Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts
- Dr. Pam Eddinger, President, Bunker Hill Community College
- Barbara Fields, Trustee, Black Educators Alliance
- Kim Janey, Senior Project Director, Mass Advocates for Children
- Suzanne Lee, Former Principal, Josiah Quincy School
- Claudio Martinez, Executive Director, Hyde Square Task Force; BPS School Committee Member
- Keith McDermott, Director of Athletics, Roxbury Community College
- Mary Jo Meisner, Vice President for Communications, Community Relations and Public Affairs, The Boston Foundation
- Dr. J. Keith Motley, Chancellor, University of Massachusetts Boston
- Erin Murphy, Boston Public School Teacher
- Laura Perille, President & CEO, EdVestors; BPS Parent
- Angelique Pirozzi, Organizational Specialist, National Education Association
- Chris Supple, Board Member, Autism Speaks, New England Chapter
- Dr. Mary Walsh, Executive Director, City Connects; Kerns Professor, Lynch School of

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- Cedric Woods, Director, Institute for New England Native American Studies, University of Massachusetts Boston

## Staff Support

- Daniel Green, Jamaica Plain resident

Organizational titles and affiliations are provided for identification purposes only.

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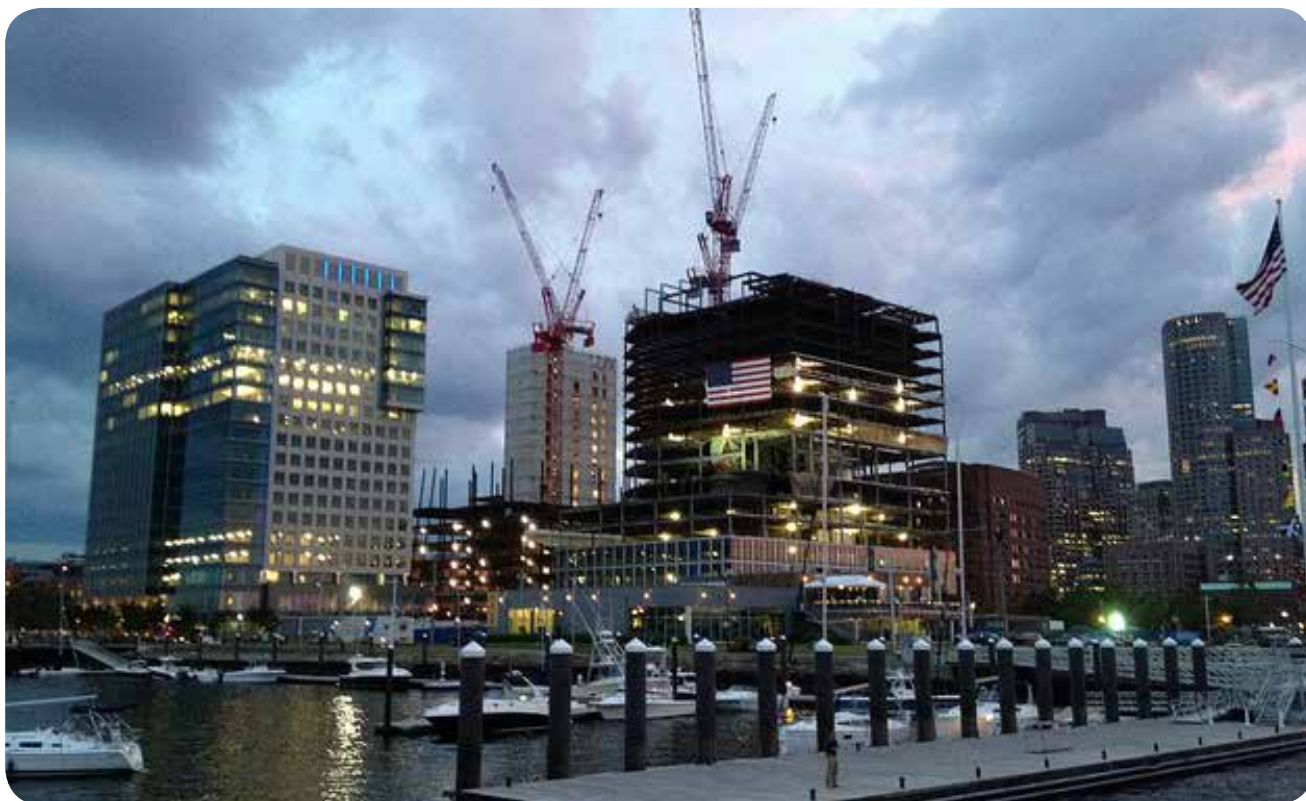
**Economic  
Development**  
Working Group  
Transition Team Report

April 16, 2014

Photos: Kit Pyne







“What can Boston city government do—whether by itself or in partnership with business, labor, civic, or institutional entities—to promote the creation of jobs for residents of all Boston’s neighborhoods and the location of businesses outside the downtown business districts?”

## INTRODUCTION

As part of Mayor Martin J. Walsh’s Transition Team Committee, the Economic Development Working Group, co-chaired by Beth Williams of Roxbury Technology and led by Donna Cupelo of Verizon and Pat Moscaritolo of the Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau, discussed and solicited input from the Boston community, residents, and businesses.

## THE PROCESS

The economic development team worked within a framework that considered which existing programs and services are successful and would be best to KEEP, which new initiatives or expansions is important to IMPLEMENT, and which DREAMS for which to strive.



Mayor Martin J. Walsh asked the Economic Development Working Group “What can Boston city government do—whether by itself or in partnership with business, labor, civic, or institutional entities—to promote the creation of jobs for residents of all Boston’s neighborhoods and the location of businesses outside the downtown business districts? What can Boston city government do in partnership with others to retain, strengthen, and grow jobs in existing institutions and corporations throughout the City of Boston?”

Representing a cross-section of Boston’s business community – including small business, labor, educational, neighborhood, and not-for-profit institutions—the economic development transition team identified some key themes emerging from input gathered through public hearings and the Boston14.org website. These themes, though not exhaustive, serve as a framework to guide the new administration as it puts forth its policy initiatives related to economic development.

Thriving businesses bring employment and vitality to Boston’s neighborhoods and commercial districts. In order to attract and foster new businesses in our city, the Walsh administration must send a clear message that Boston is a vibrant locale that welcomes businesses of all sizes. Streamlining the permitting process, ensuring interdepartmental coordination, and clearing a direct path for business assistance will convey that Boston, ideally located in today’s global economy, is “open for business.”

We believe each resident of the city of Boston has innate capabilities to achieve success and that there is a responsibility shared among individuals, families, civic institutions,

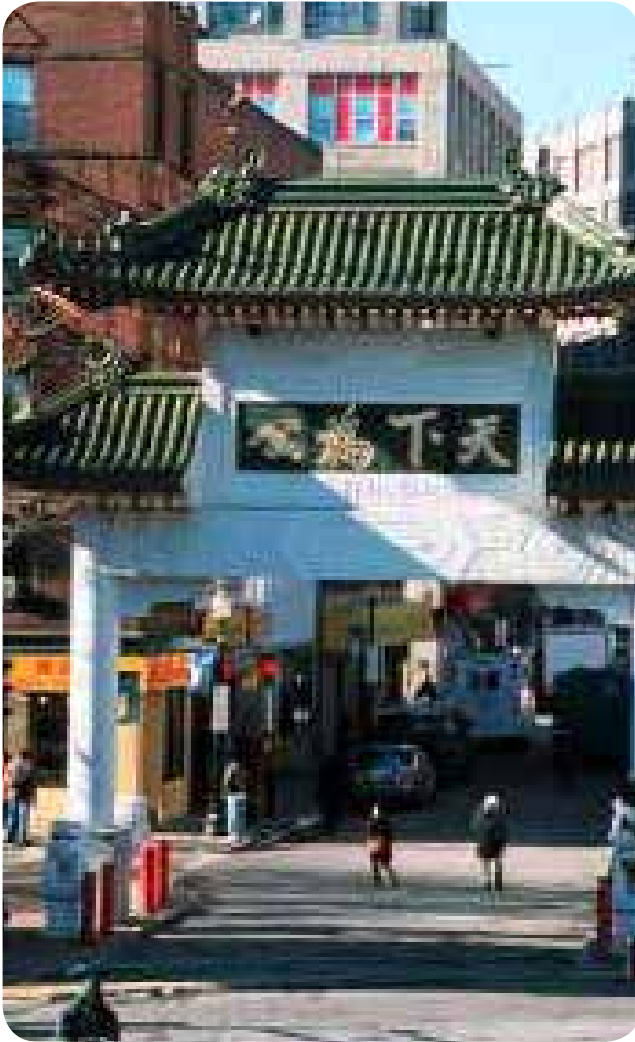
businesses—large and small—and government to facilitate the development and actualization of these capabilities. We further believe that among government’s many responsibilities is the responsibility to formulate and promote economic development policies founded on principles of equity, access, and opportunity. Economic development policies that encourage sustainable economic growth are important to creating those opportunities.

Toward this vision, we have defined our charge to the mayor: develop an agenda to support these beliefs and achieve the ends to which they aspire.

## THE RECOMMENDATIONS

### FOCUS 1: DEVELOP PATHWAYS TO OVERCOME INCOME & WEALTH DISPARITY AND DISPROPORTIONATE OPPORTUNITY

Boston is one of the most expensive cities and has one of the highest rates of income inequality in the nation. One in five Boston residents lives in poverty. The goal of a sustainable economy providing equity, access, and opportunity for all requires policies and programs that actively and aggressively counter income inequality and promote high-wage growth. Our economy



must not only be competitive, it must be fair. Beyond job creation, we must address job quality. And we must enforce and enhance policies designed to improve the wages and working conditions of the 40% of Boston's workforce currently in low wage jobs.

## KEEP

- 1) The City of Boston is already aware of income disparity issues but it must utilize this knowledge in a productive manner. The city must leverage existing knowledge about economic disparities to inform its policy agenda.

## IMPLEMENT

- 1) Too many residents struggle to earn enough money to provide for their families. An examination of the current impact and enforcement of the Living Wage ordinance and the feasibility of its expansion will allow Boston to ensure that all residents have access to good jobs that allow them to provide for their loved ones.
- 2) Residents of the city who have minor offenses on their records routinely are passed over for jobs they are fully capable of performing. Developing a strong position on CORI reform and hiring will help economic development in every neighborhood.

## DREAM

- 1) Economic development must include not only access to fair and equitable job creation, equitable schools, and business development, but also wealth building strategies for individuals and communities. Create an Office of Financial Empowerment to prioritize resolving poverty issues as a critical issue at the top of every agenda.
- 2) No worker should have to lose wages because of a lack of child care. Ensure that universal child care is available so that Boston's

workforce is always at full strength and its children are cared for. Consideration for competitive grant programs for day care centers that stay open to accommodate multi-work shift workers should be made.

- 3) People from every neighborhood, from every demographic, and from every income level must have access to educational opportunities that prepare them for job opportunities in any industry in which they aspire to work.
- 4) A solid economic foundation must be laid citywide so that this generation thrives. Residents who require financial help need to have the resources available to improve their lives.

## **FOCUS 2: ESTABLISH A STRONGER CONNECTION BETWEEN EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

A productive and profitable workforce is Boston's greatest resource as new industries emerge and old ones continue to grow. The city must ensure that educational opportunities and fruitful partnerships are available to provide residents the resources they need to achieve long-term employment and economic security.

### **KEEP**

- 1) Continue the city's support for one-stop career centers and link them to all available assets, including schools, employers, neighborhood centers, etc.
- 2) Career readiness for all youth must become a reality. Continue support for summer job opportunities that will expose students across the city to various sectors.
- 3) Boston's immigrant population has been growing at a faster rate than the rest of the state. The Mayor's Office of New Bostonians is a great tool to assist Boston's immigrant community in becoming active in the social and economic life of the city.
- 4) Continue to support the state STEM plan and its @Scale programs in the City of Boston.

### **IMPLEMENT**

- 1) Transform Madison Park Vocational High School into a national model for vocational and technical education.
- 2) Leverage relationships with Bunker Hill Community College and Roxbury Community College to help train Boston's future workforce.
- 3) Examine, update, and ensure the goals of the Boston Residents Job Policy to reflect the city's changing demographics.
- 4) Connect high schools, vocational schools, and community college programs with employers to link students with industries that stand to benefit from the skills acquired at these



educational facilities.

- 5) Commit to workforce training, re-training, and career pathways for youth and adults in high quality training programs.
- 6) Continue and increase funding for ESL resources connected with training and GED programs that support immigrants' immersion into Boston's economy and diverse workforce.
- 7) The city's economy is a part of the greater Massachusetts economy. Ensure that the city's plans are consistent with the state's economic development plans in order to effectively coordinate and work toward the same goals.

## DREAM

- 1) Incorporate the arts as a main component curriculum in public schools grades K-12. Focus on STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) curricula will have long-term benefits for the city and the culture it embodies. Fluency in creativity and visual learning, in addition to math and science, is what a 21st century workforce needs.
- 2) Employers from leading industries in the region know which skills will be needed for workers to succeed in tomorrow's workforce. In order to efficiently train workers, the city should partner with businesses and create employer-driven education and training programs.
- 3) Work with various businesses and corporations around the city to create opportunities for youth and adult internships in different industry fields.
- 4) A well-formed workforce relies on education that extends beyond a high school education. The creation of a bridge program to vocational schools, junior colleges, and four-year bachelor programs will allow residents to continue building career skills.
- 5) Parental involvement in a child's education is a crucial part of success. Public education should be embraced not only in the classroom but also at home. Support more alignment between the Boston Public Schools and parental engagement to benefit all students.



### FOCUS 3: SUPPORT BUSINESSES IN BOSTON THROUGH PROGRAMS THAT FOSTER AN ENVIRONMENT FOR GROWTH AND JOB CREATION

As the economy begins to rebound from the recession, Boston still faces challenges in ensuring continued economic growth. By listening to business concerns and partnering with local employers to address administrative and procedural issues, the City of Boston can promote job growth and expansion across the region for businesses of all sizes.

#### KEEP

- 1) Boston Main Streets should continue as a resource for small businesses to assist in revitalizing neighborhoods and promoting small, locally owned business.
- 2) Permitting costs must remain low so new businesses are attracted to the city and existing businesses can continue expanding.

#### IMPLEMENT

- 1) Establish an Ombudsperson to assist new and

existing businesses by performing a review of all permitting processes and identifying ways to streamline the permitting process.

- 2) Form an Economic Advisory or Business Council, comprised of large and small business owners and other external stakeholders, who will collaboratively identify and address issues that inhibit future job growth and development opportunities in Boston.
- 3) All too often it takes businesses longer than it should to open. While waiting for all permits, they are spending valuable capital to keep afloat. The establishment of a predictable and streamlined permitting process across all departments will help businesses open their doors faster.
- 4) As a city, promote and support Boston's green economy.
- 5) Boston is not an isolated city; we are surrounded by cities and towns with great universities, hospitals, businesses, and creative economies. In order to further our economic development, we must promote regionalism and link the Boston business community with our neighbors.
- 6) Create a culture of excellent customer service throughout the city to improve the delivery of services for residents and businesses.
- 7) Restructure and strengthen the Minority and Women Business Enterprise Program by streamlining the MWBE certification process and by establishing measurement and reporting mechanisms to ensure compliance.

- 8) Make Procurement Bids issued by the City of Boston accessible publicly, leverage available technologies that can automate and/or streamline bid notification and review processes, and offer information to small businesses on how to prepare a city bid.

## DREAM

- 1) City funds are limited in nature, but working together with private funds, we can achieve so much more. Joint public/private ventures will allow the city to take its economic development to a new level.

## FOCUS 4: ESTABLISH FAIR AND TRANSPARENT POLICIES ON LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

True economic development occurs where land use planning and development and workforce development strategy converge. Land use planning is the key to guiding physical growth that supports expansion of local business, entrepreneurship, and employment. It is also critical to the production of the volume, variety, and range of housing Boston neighborhoods need to grow at every income level. Additionally, it is essential to

creating the kind of mixed-use districts into which modern employers are expanding.

## KEEP

- 1) Maintain the urban planning and design aspects of the current Boston Redevelopment Agency that support responsible growth in the City of Boston.

## IMPLEMENT

- 1) To be successful and support our sustainability goals, Boston's land use planning leaders must thoughtfully coordinate land use planning and development with Boston's network of public improvements and infrastructure including open spaces, public transportation, waterfronts, streets, water, and utilities.
- 2) Land use planning must continue to engage the design fields involved in development to maintain and improve the high quality of architecture and public realm improvements Bostonians enjoy.
- 3) Improve transparency of public land use.

## DREAM

- 1) An updated comprehensive plan will help to bind neighborhoods together in terms of vision and actual physical development, make for a more holistic Boston in terms of planning and development, and provide equal opportunity to all neighborhoods in the city.
- 2) Affordable housing is the cornerstone of a

diverse, thriving community. The city's existing families, workforce, and young residents must have access to more affordable housing in the city in order for our economy to be strong.

## **FOCUS 5: ESTABLISH AN ENVIRONMENT THAT ENCOURAGES, SUPPORTS, AND PROMOTES ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND NEW BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

Entrepreneurship is emerging as one of the strongest drivers of economic development in Boston and nationally. It will be essential for the strength of Boston's future economy to create a culture that is encouraging, supportive, and incentivizing for existing entrepreneurs and those striving to become entrepreneurs. In light of the tenuousness of today's economy, entrepreneurship offers flexible career choices for new and recent graduates, as well as those in mid-career who are looking for new opportunities.

### **KEEP**

- 1) The innovation ecosystem goes beyond companies themselves. Boston must invest to make sure that the quality of life is such that

we can continue to attract and retain college and university graduates. Citywide investments in transportation and housing, as well as streamlining regulation, will make Boston a more welcoming city for new business.

### **IMPLEMENT**

- 1) Develop and communicate a clear vision for the Seaport Innovation District in South Boston and devise critical enablers to support its progression and success, so that a model may be emulated in other parts of the city. This would include housing, talent acquisition and retention, access to capital, and infrastructure improvements.
- 2) Entrepreneurs flourish within a vibrant ecosystem of peers, mentors, advisors, capital, and help in navigating government requirements. Support start-ups by providing partnerships and linkages, including mentor and networking assistance, as well as encouraging events. Aspiring and seasoned entrepreneurs, investors, mentors, and service providers can meet and collaborate to create more vibrant innovation communities.
- 3) Sales and understanding customer needs are key success factors for start-up companies. Help young companies navigate Boston's RFPs or purchasing requirements where applicable.
- 4) Building a new business requires long hours and hard work. Use the mayor's bully pulpit to encourage Boston's entrepreneurs and make it clear their efforts and contributions to the city are welcomed and appreciated.

## DREAM

- 1) By replicating the success of the Seaport Innovation District in other parts of Boston, (such as Roxbury or Allston) and in a manner consistent with neighborhood needs, other communities will have the opportunity to thrive. This innovation district should be scaled locally and connect Boston residents with emerging companies seeking to hire new employees. The city should ensure the vision is clear for those clusters so that the private sector, state and federal agencies, and nonprofit organizations can build that vision into their own strategic plans and support the city's vision.
- 2) Establish public/private partnerships to provide faster transportation links between these new innovation districts within Boston as well as with Cambridge.
- 3) Advocate for improved access to public transportation and funding by the state to support economic growth. As an example, the Fairmont Line has been a great addition to the MBTA and has allowed greater access to public transportation.
- 4) Overhead costs are one of the main reasons many businesses have trouble opening their doors. If the city can help emerging businesses gain access to resources and equipment to help with initial overhead costs, new businesses will be able to employ more residents and contribute to the economic development of the city as a whole.

## FOCUS 6: ENHANCE AND EXPAND THE GROWING AND ESSENTIAL ENVIRONMENT OF INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

Boston is a city rich in history and tradition. It is also a city constantly innovating for tomorrow. This is reflected in the changing demographics of its residents and workforce, at world-renowned educational institutions, and within new and evolving industry sectors that fuel the economy. Boston must keep an eye toward the future by not only supporting developments in research and innovation, but also by adopting technologies to deliver first-class city services to the people who live and work here.

## KEEP

- 1) Keeping and building on the institutional knowledge that exists in city departments and programs is a great way to ensure basic city services continue to run well.
- 2) Ensure that existing and planned technological advancements that improve interactions among citizens, businesses, and city government are



implemented and maintained.

- 3) More than a third of Boston's population is between ages 20-34, which is the highest proportion of young people in the country. Boston's Onein3 program must be kept and revitalized to make sure that Boston is able to keep the bright young people who make our city so vibrant here.

## IMPLEMENT

- 1) Infusing new technology into city services to improve processes will improve access. Base technology and system-design decisions on sound research about what people need and can use effectively, compared against the needs, goals, and constraints of the city of Boston. Working with existing technology companies in the region could facilitate the discovery, implementation, and adoption of technology.
- 2) Little City Halls across the city would make City Hall accessible to an even greater number of people. City services will be more readily available and Office of Neighborhood Services staff could use them to meet with constituents. These centers can be stationed at already existing city buildings such as libraries.

## FOCUS 7: RECREATE A ROBUST AND PROGRESSIVE ENVIRONMENT THAT ENHANCES THE ARTS, CULTURE, AND TOURISM INDUSTRIES

Boston is a city that benefits from a number of industries that

drive its economy and, in turn, the region's economy. Among these sectors is the broadly-defined tourism industry. The foundation of Boston's brand or Boston's brand essence as a visitor destination rests on the worldwide reputation of its iconic cultural and historical attractions and venues, and on its proven reputation as a destination that can successfully host major special events and festivals.

While over the past decade the tourism industry has been a robust contributor to Boston's economy and success, competition for visitor spending from destinations across the globe requires a comprehensive response. Boston must create and build strong partnerships among city government, nonprofit cultural organizations, educational institutions, the private sector, and the other cities that surround Boston in order to grow the region's visitor economy.

## KEEP

- 1) Boston has a vast treasure of historical sites and cultural institutions. We must continue and increase promotion of historical attractions and market cultural institutions to ensure that Boston remains a top-tier tourist city and premier destination.
- 2) Learning art from a young age will develop

visual and creative learning skills that can be used for a lifetime. We must maintain arts education in the public schools.

## IMPLEMENT

- 1) A new, stronger focus on arts and cultural development as a component of economic development will allow the arts to be understood as anchor institutions in Boston.
- 2) Revamp the City of Boston's Film Office website to include online permitting, city services, and information on dining and hotels that benefit from the films shot in Boston. Film production can be a great economic boost for Boston.
- 3) Encourage more music and arts festivals throughout the city and its neighborhoods to bring foot traffic into neighborhoods and spur economic development. Music and arts festivals are a great way to encourage residents of Boston and elsewhere to visit often-overlooked neighborhoods.

## DREAM

- 1) Arts organizations have ambitious agendas but often do not have adequate funds. With increased funding for the arts, they will be able to hire, serve, and attract more people in and to Boston.
- 2) Boston is one of the great cities in the United States and should promote itself vigorously throughout the region, country, and world. By launching partnerships with the private sector, state government, and other cities to drive the tourism business to Boston, its neighborhoods, and the region new dollars will be brought to the local economy.

## Economic Development Working Group

### Co-chairs

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- Pat Moscaritolo, President & CEO, Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau

### Members

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- Gaye Bok, Venture Partner, Excel Venture Management
- Jim Brett, President and CEO, The New England Council
- Ken Casey, Musician and Business Owner
- Gerald Chertavian, Founder & CEO, Year Up
- Jonathan DePina, District Officer of Community Outreach and Workforce Participation/Project Manager, Gilbane Construction
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- Jim English, Senior Vice President, Suffolk Construction
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- Paul Guzzi, President, Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce
- Jack Harrington, Co-Founder & Principal, Atlantic Associates, Inc.
- Greg Janey, President, Janey Co. Inc.; Vice President, Massachusetts Minority Contractors Association
- Arthur Jemison, Deputy Undersecretary, MA Department of Housing and Community Development
- Jackie Jenkins-Scott, President, Wheelock College
- James Jennings, Professor of Urban

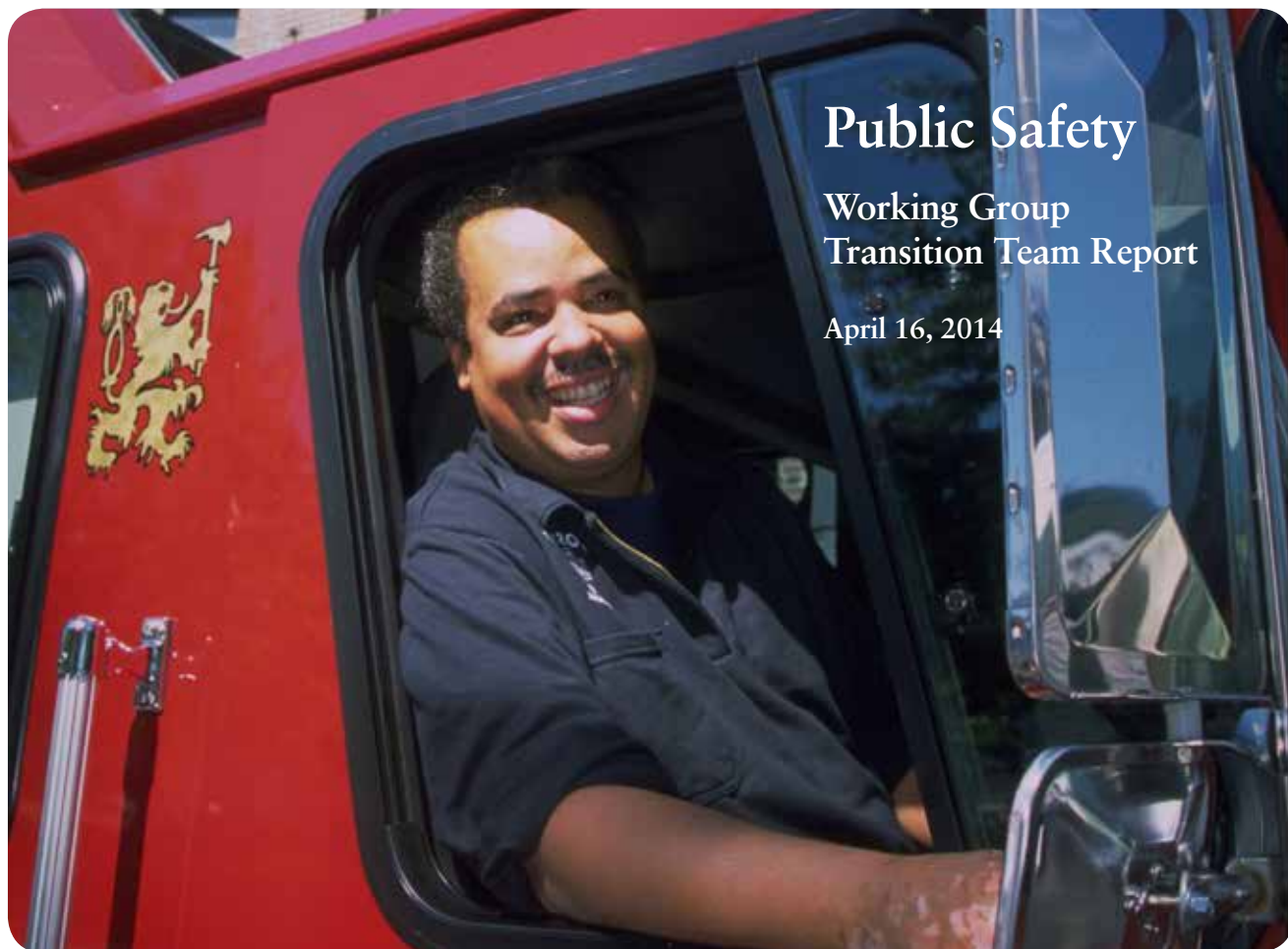
Environmental Policy and Planning, Tufts University

- Brian Lang, President, UNITE HERE Local 26, Hospitality Workers Union
- Glynn Lloyd, Founder, City Fresh Caterers
- Victoria Maguire, State Permit Ombudsman
- Ron Marlow, President, National Association of State Minority, Women and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Directors
- Jill Medvedow, Ellen Matilda Poss Director, Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston
- Susan Moir, Director, Labor Resource Center, University of Massachusetts Boston; Gay and Lesbian Labor Activist Network (GALLAN)
- Don Packer, Video Editor, EngineRoomEdit
- Kara Pernice, Managing Director, Nielsen Norman Group
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- Roxana Rivera, District Leader, SEIU 32BJ District 615
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Organizational titles and affiliations are provided for identification purposes only.



Photos: Kit Pyne







“What can Boston city government do—whether by itself or in partnership with others—to make Boston a national leader in ending gun violence and youth violence?”

## INTRODUCTION

Mayor Martin J. Walsh’s Public Safety Working Group is comprised of public safety professionals, community advocates, elected officials, and policy makers.

Mayor-elect Martin J. Walsh asked the Public Safety Working Group, “What can Boston city government do—whether by itself or in partnership with others—to make Boston a national leader in ending gun violence and youth violence?”

## THE PROCESS

While we discussed and received public testimony concerning many different issues related to public safety, combatting gun violence and youth violence were our two main

areas of focus. We also considered complex issues including human trafficking, violence against women, high levels of psychological/emotional trauma, substance abuse, scarcity of reentry supports, gun trafficking, problems in policing, terrorism, property crimes, and a myriad of quality-of-life issues.

After three policy discussion meetings and two public forum events, the Public Safety Working Group found many commonalities across topic areas. Certain overarching themes emerged. We consistently heard calls for:

- 1) Increased interagency coordination around public safety goals—this includes all municipal agencies, not just agencies commonly considered “public safety” agencies. These requests often included increased communication with state and federal agencies, as well as other relevant private foundations, agencies, and nonprofit groups.
- 2) Increased social support services.
- 3) Thoughtful planning around prevention.
- 4) Neighborhood-based programming.
- 5) Increased platforms for community engagement.

These four specific areas emerged as the areas to begin applying these principles:

- 1) Enhance Community Policing
- 2) Create a High-level Position for Public Safety Coordination

- 3) Increase Prevention Services through Neighborhood-based Health Centers

- 4) Increase Trauma-Informed Services to Female Survivors of Violence and Exploitation

Within each of these four areas we offer Keep, Implement, and Dream recommendations, defined as policies, ideas and practices that are currently in place and should be kept; implemented in the short term; and implemented as long-term but realizable “dream” goals.

Finally, our Working Group suggests that every City of Boston agency have a public safety goal and that Boston Police reciprocally establish a goal for each city agency.

## THE RECOMMENDATIONS

### FOCUS 1: ENHANCE COMMUNITY POLICING

Community policing in Boston consists of two integral pieces: neighborhood community members and the Boston Police Department (BPD). Community members want to live in safe and livable neighborhoods and police want to build trust. The community would like police to be consistent in the ways laws are enforced, to be fair, and to allow



opportunities for community members to regularly provide input in the way that they are policed. These goals are not and should never be mutually exclusive.

Community policing in the 1990s was neighborhood-based and was grounded in the “Three P’s”: Prevention, Partnership, and Problem Solving. Boston’s new vision must be Collaborative Policing: a fluid, cooperative model

that mobilizes the skill, power, and commitment of all city agencies and the community at large.

## KEEP

- 1) Community Service Officers: There are incredible Community Service Officers in the BPD who must continue to be supported.
- 2) Police Partnerships with Youth: Collaborations like YouthConnect, a partnership between Boys and Girls Clubs of Boston and BPD, which works to provide neighborhood youth with support, should be maintained. The Police Athletic League (PAL) also provides engagement opportunities for Boston’s young people.
- 3) Neighborhood Watch: Neighborhood Watch continuously creates and fosters relationships with many engaged community groups and should be maintained.

## IMPLEMENT

- 1) More Walking Beats: This will help maintain positive relationships with the neighborhoods.
- 2) Increased Amount and Promotion of Community Advising Councils: This will allow for community members to share their questions and concerns directly with the BPD.
- 3) Examine Specialized Units: It is suggested that BPD review its staffing levels, especially in the specialized units, to put more uniformed officers on walking beats in the neighborhood business districts.
- 4) Establish and Promote District Community Councils: Each BPD District should have a

council of community members to advise District Commanders in the implementation of Community Policing. Every Police District shares common issues, but also has specific concerns that require their own particular solutions.

## DREAM

- 1) Community Policing Principles in All Areas of Policing: This refers to agreeing upon a definition of the fundamentals of community policing, changing perceptions around it, and finding more innovative ways to incorporate it into all levels of policing.
- 2) High Levels of Reciprocal Trust and Engagement between Community and Police: This can be achieved with steadfast commitment to increased collaboration and innovative engagement practices.

## FOCUS 2: CREATE A CABINET-LEVEL POSITION FOR PUBLIC SAFETY COORDINATION

This recommendation was decided upon before Mayor Walsh appointed two full-time staff to work exclusively on coordination around violence and public safety. That decision is a great step in a positive direction, but it is recommended that a cabinet level position overseeing all aspects of public safety should still be considered.

## KEEP

- 1) Department Autonomy: Public Safety departments would still have autonomy. A person overseeing all the departments would mainly work to provide insights around collaboration, not micromanage staff.

## IMPLEMENT

- 1) Chief of Public Safety: The person in this position would work to ensure coordination and cohesiveness across all public safety departments (Police, EMS, Fire, Office of Emergency Management).

## DREAM

- 1) High Levels of Efficiency and Collaboration: The existence of a Chief of Public Safety will enable public safety groups to collaborate better and more efficiently. It will also open new opportunities to increase collaboration between traditional public safety departments and non-traditional departments. For instance, the Chief could work more closely with Parks & Recreation or Arts & Culture departments.

## FOCUS 3: INCREASE PREVENTION SERVICES THROUGH NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED HEALTH CENTERS

Because the Affordable Health Care Act will expand the number of Boston patients seeking health care at their Neighborhood-





based Health Centers (NHCs), many different populations will be accessing health care with a new urgency in coming years. Therefore, we feel it is beneficial to partner NHCs with the City of Boston so they can become central locations for Boston's public safety prevention and intervention efforts. This would include, but is not limited to reentry services, substance abuse

services, support for survivors of domestic violence and commercial sexual exploitation, and programming for high-risk youth.

Our recommendation does not suggest or expect that NHCs create and facilitate all of the programming themselves. They may create and facilitate some programming, but we primarily envision them as hosts of other facilitators from municipal government, nonprofit, and private sectors. Utilizing NHCs will also allow each neighborhood to have its own resources which would lead to localized best practices.

## KEEP

### 1) Neighborhood-based Health Center

Autonomy: Partnering with the city is beneficial for NHCs and does not require the many organizations currently doing good work to stop providing excellent service. Rather, these partnerships are mutually beneficial and allow for comprehensive care.

## IMPLEMENT

1) Mapping of Resources: Utilizing data from government agencies (e.g., city, state, federal), nonprofits, community groups, and colleges and universities, all services related to public safety should be mapped out so that each NHC could be properly aligned with relevant community resources.

2) More Preventative Resources for High Risk Youth: Programming at NHCs should make

identifying high risk youth and providing them with a range of supportive services at earliest signs of risky, violent, or disruptive behavior a priority. Presently, services are often made available once high-risk youth are already well into destructive behaviors. Early programming at NHCs could work to prevent this trend.

- 3) Pilot Models: Involve a small number of NHCs in pilot public safety programs. If successful, the model would be expanded.

## DREAM

- 1) Comprehensive Prevention and Intervention: The ideal is that every Boston neighborhood would have NHCs that can comprehensively support the health, safety, and well-being of every resident. This public health model works to prevent root causes of individuals' problems and issues, and intervenes by providing wrap-around supports to individuals and families.

## FOCUS 4: INCREASE TRAUMA-INFORMED SERVICES TO FEMALE



Photo: Kit Pyne

## SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE AND EXPLOITATION

Female survivors of violence and exploitation have been underserved for a long time. This population ranges from survivors of rape, domestic violence, prostitution and human trafficking, to victims of street assaults and harassment, as well as females coerced into holding/purchasing firearms. All these forms of violence are highly traumatic. We suggest there be increased, trauma-informed public safety resources for women who experience this kind of violence.

## KEEP

- 1) Maintain and Promote Current Support Services for Women: A wide array of local programs, many of which have been doing consistently good work for many years, exist across the city of Boston. There are also newer initiatives like LIPSTICK, which focus on women buying/holding firearms, and Hollaback! Boston, a website and social media campaign that works to eliminate street harassment of women. Programs and initiatives of this sort should be more actively supported and promoted.



- 2) Keep BPD's Human Trafficking Unit: The Human Trafficking Unit of the BPD has done great work with limited resources.

## IMPLEMENT

- 1) Provide More Resources to the Human Trafficking Unit: This unit should be made a priority at BPD's Bureau of Investigative Services. There should be an increased punitive focus on demand, with more services dedicated to women who are struggling to exit a life of prostitution.
- 2) Create a High Risk Runaway Squad: This squad, housed at BPD, could work in coordination with the Boston School Police to bring an end to the exploitation of children through sex trafficking. It should be fashioned after Dallas, Texas' High Risk Runway Team.

## DREAM

- 1) Consistently Fund Services for Exploited Women: We would like to see well-funded, and consistently supported programs for exploited women. This includes vocational and housing opportunities for formerly prostituted women, increased beds for domestic violence survivors,

and exploitation prevention programming in schools.

- 2) Cultural Change Towards Violence Against Women: With so many rapes, assaults, and incidents of harassment in Boston neighborhoods, it is our dream to have a culture that is wholly intolerant towards these types of behaviors because the highest levels of leadership in city government is prioritizing policy to defeat such injustices.

## CONCLUSION

Some of the suggestions in our report are small changes, while others are bigger and will take more time to realize. We understand that patience and perseverance are needed to meet these goals.

As a group, we did not always agree on every point, but we were surprised by how much consensus was reached around our highest priorities. With increased collaboration and inclusiveness around the areas we have highlighted, we believe that Boston could be one of the safest and most resource-rich cities in America. As Mayor Walsh and others have frequently noted, we cannot arrest our way out of public safety problems. Everyone in Boston needs to work collectively to make this vision a reality.

## Public Safety Working Group

### Co-chairs

- Andrea Cabral, MA Secretary of Public Safety
- Bob Dunford, Former Superintendent, BPD; Facilitator, UMass Boston

## Members

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- Rev. Jeffrey Brown, Founder, Ten Point Coalition
- Clementina Cherry, President and CEO, Louis D. Brown Peace Institute
- Mike Christopher, Manager, Public Policy/ Public Affairs, Mass. Executive Office of Public Safety and Security
- Mike Coelho
- Michael Donovan, Clerk Magistrate-Superior Court
- Thea James, Emergency Medicine Physician, Boston Medical Center; Director/Founder, Violence Intervention Advocacy Program
- Cherie Jimenez, Director, EVA Center
- Genevieve King, Former Captain Detective, BPD
- Dr. Jack McDevitt, Associate Dean, School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Northeastern University
- Michael Mullane, Retired Boston Firefighter; 3rd Vice President, International Association of Firefighters
- Dana Pierce, Chief, Roxbury District Court
- Ricardo Quiroga, Founder and Former Executive Director of Casa Esperanza, Inc.
- William Rodriguez, Chair and Assistant Professor, Juvenile Justice and Youth Advocacy Department, Wheelock College
- Carol Rose, Executive Director, American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts
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## Arts and Culture

Working Group  
Transition Team Report

April 16, 2014

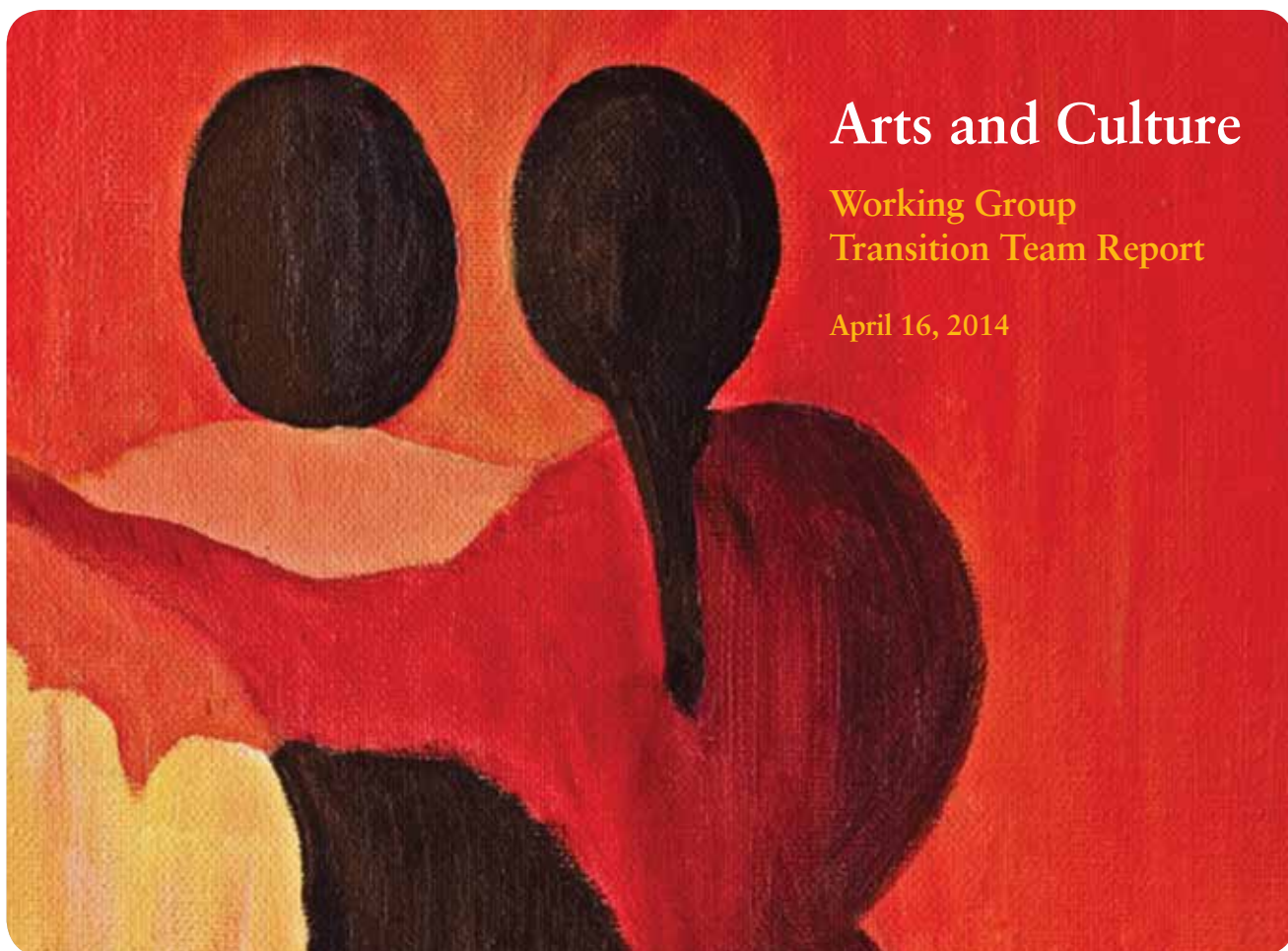


Photo: Kit Pyne



Photo: Commonwealth  
Shakespeare Company



# “How do we make Boston a municipal arts leader?”

## INTRODUCTION

Arts and culture are at the heart of every great city. Mayor Martin J. Walsh has spoken eloquently about the power of the arts to create a Boston where each resident's potential is nurtured and the culture of our diverse neighborhoods is celebrated. Boston embraces the unique character of 140 ethnic communities, offering everyone the opportunity to reimagine the possibilities for our city and the new histories being created every day.

At their best, arts and culture act as a mirror, reflecting both the beautiful and brutal realities of the world while at the same time asking what else might be possible. They provide a pathway to wholeness, a way for diverse citizens to find voice and civic harmony. They attract talented young people of all ages, create jobs, and draw in visitors.

Boston's rich tradition of arts and culture is deeply rooted in American history. We are home to America's first public park, public library, public secondary school, public school for African American students, school for visually impaired students, and America's oldest performing arts organization, the Boston Symphony Orchestra. But today, despite its storied and vibrant cultural past, Boston is not a municipal arts leader in America. Mayor Walsh has asked: "How do we make Boston a municipal arts leader? In other words, what can Boston city government do to promote arts and culture in and around Boston? Where and how can the arts and culture community assist in advancing the aims of the city government?"

## THE PROCESS

To answer these questions, the Arts & Culture Working Group sought guidance through public hearings, consultation with peers, and research. A clear consensus emerged around vision and values.

In order to unleash Boston's great potential, we need an equitable partnership among City Hall, citizens, private philanthropy, and business, all working together with a common purpose and plan.

Great cities – as well as cities in the midst of revitalization – hold these beliefs at their core:

- 1) Arts and culture are powerful means to engage residents in creating a collective vision of their city's future.
- 2) Participation in cultural activities that reflect

the diversity of a community fosters respect and understanding and strengthens communities.

- 3) A city's cultural prowess and economic success are closely linked. The creative economy attracts an educated citizenry that is sought after by businesses of all sizes.
- 4) Arts and culture are woven into the fabric of government, business, philanthropy, and civil service. The city and its mayor play an essential role leveraging relationships and resources of the public and private sectors, championing the arts locally, nationally, and internationally.

## THE RECOMMENDATIONS

Our investigation identified six priorities for action. To become a municipal arts leader, the mayor, his administration, and the City of Boston must:

- 1) Commit dedicated funding to the arts and increase that funding until Boston ranks among the top five cities in the nation as measured by per capita support for its diverse arts and culture activity.
- 2) Embark on an inclusive and comprehensive process to create and deliver a cultural plan that will provide a path to greater success within eighteen months.
- 3) Embrace the arts as an essential component of the education of all Boston students.
- 4) Release the pent-up potential of our artists and organizations through a streamlined, transparent, and functional permitting system

for events, performances and public art.

- 5) Recognize that affordable housing and workspace for artists and cultural organizations are integral to successful neighborhood and community development.
- 6) Embrace cultural equity and the rich diversity of Boston's population by supporting a wide range of arts and cultural traditions and by engaging historically disadvantaged communities.

Taken together, these actions will help make Boston a great, culturally vibrant city. In the brief that follows the Arts & Culture Working Group recommends a bold vision and leadership role for the City of Boston that maximizes the potential of its arts and culture sector.

On behalf of the arts and culture community, we offer recommendations organized under five broad themes:

1. City Hall embodies an attitude of "Yes."
2. The Mayor, his senior staff and all City Hall departments serve as visible, engaged cultural advocates.
3. There is a shared agenda among arts and cultural sector stakeholders.
4. The City of Boston dedicates adequate resources to finance the sector's priorities.
5. All Boston's residents, especially our children, have access to the arts.

The report that follows details Keep/Implement/Dream strategies.

"This Country  
cannot afford  
to be materially  
rich and  
spiritually  
poor."

John F. Kennedy, State of the Union Message,  
January 14, 1963



## FOCUS 1: CITY HALL EMBODIES AN ATTITUDE OF “YES”

The arts and culture community needs a public sector that embraces its role as partner. It must support artists and performers and help make events, performances, and public art flourish throughout the city instead of focusing on its role as regulator.

### KEEP

- 1) Public Art Program: Keep and enhance Boston’s Public Art Program and perform an assessment of existing exhibition and presenting programs.
- 2) Maintain current regulations on co-op housing: Maintain the city’s laws and regulations governing artists’ co-op housing and vigorously oppose any changes to the state’s current laws and regulations governing it. Champion the creation and sustainability of co-ops on both residential and business levels.

### IMPLEMENT

- 1) Permitting: Centralize the permitting process for arts events and public arts projects in a dedicated office associated with or subsidiary to the new Office of Arts and Culture.
  - a) To ensure transparency and efficiency, post the rules and requirements for permits with clear instruction and links to an

online permitting process on the city website.

- 2) BRA Artist Housing Initiative: Reexamine and retool the BRA’s artists’ housing initiative to better serve artists. Ensure that all units are affordable, are occupied by working artists, and are large enough to support those artists’ creative needs.
- 3) Adopt federal policy for MAGI: Use Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) as the measure for income eligibility for income/ need based housing and for other need based city programs. MAGI is used by the Federal Government for the Affordable Care Act.
- 4) Fair Labor Practices:
  - a) Employ Fair Trade principles in all venues where artists perform or sell their work.
  - b) Ensure that Boston abides by fair labor standards and that artists of all disciplines are not expected to provide their work and services for free or below appropriate wages when employed by the city.
  - c) Make the meaningful remuneration of artists participating in public events an economic prerequisite in planning the event. Student artists should not be employed as “cheap labor.”
- 5) Establish an Artist Services Program: The city can be a connector and create an Artist Services Program within the Office of Arts and Culture for artists across disciplines.
  - a) Move the BRA Artist Certification





Program to this new program and charge it as a program that provides information on networks, connections, and resources for artists.

- b) Establish a relief fund that offers disaster aid to individual artists of all disciplines.
- c) As part of disaster aid, make no-interest loans and microloans available to artists by the city credit union.
- d) Implement the Artists First Initiative which includes an occupational health and wellness program.

- 6) Poet Laureate: Relaunch the city's poet laureate program.

## DREAM

- 1) Convert unused/underused buildings: The City of Boston takes the lead to convert unused and underused buildings to living and working spaces for certified and verified artists, musicians, actors, dancers, and writers. To ensure and preserve affordability, the city can encourage use of mechanisms such as limited equity ownership and control.
  - a) Enforce rules that artists' spaces must have working artists living in them.
  - b) Support the creation of community arts centers and maker spaces, allowing for innovative ways to make affordable workspace available to Boston's artists in all neighborhoods.
  - c) In creating artist spaces include a "cradle to the grave" philosophy that enables artists, during all their life stages, to learn, create, mentor, and share art among themselves and the community while sustaining a livelihood by practicing their discipline.
- 2) Preserve existing arts communities: Preserve existing arts communities threatened with displacement due to redevelopment and escalating rents. To accomplish this, strengthen the enforcement of existing regulations and requirements regarding cultural use in mixed-use development projects.

- 3) Explore temporary work and event space: Work with private property owners to help create temporary and rentable work and performance spaces of all kinds, and catalog them in a widely promoted database.
- 4) Cultivate permanent and temporary public art spaces throughout Boston: Examples abound of how permanent public art can transform a neighborhood and even a city. Equally important is the opportunity to exhibit temporary public art installations that will showcase local artists and attract national and international artists and audiences to Boston.
- 5) “Night Mayor”: Appoint a cultural operations manager or “night mayor” to coordinate the broad, cross-sector range of activities that take place primarily after dark, a time increasingly essential to the city’s economy and heavily dependent on arts and cultural activities.
- 6) Film Office: Encourage collaboration between the Office of Arts and Culture and

the Boston Film Office to ensure that their programs and policies are easy to access and supportive of the individual artists who work in experimental film, art-based film, and public video projects. Both departments should work together to expand the film sector and to create inclusive networking opportunities for the art-based film community, the commercial film community, the independent film community, and the documentary film community.

## **FOCUS 2: THE MAYOR, HIS SENIOR STAFF, AND ALL CITY HALL DEPARTMENTS SERVE AS VISIBLE, ENGAGED CULTURAL ADVOCATES**

Visible leadership by City Hall, and especially by the mayor, is necessary to communicate to the sector and to other partners in business, higher education, and private philanthropy that arts and culture are now a priority in Boston.

### **KEEP**

- 1) Visibility of the mayor: Mayor Walsh has the opportunity to enhance the Mayor’s Office by demonstrating a personal commitment to Boston’s arts and culture sector. To do so, he and his senior staff must attend and stay for the duration of arts events on a regular basis.





2) Seasonal anchor events: Keep and improve (see implement) already successful events but promote them in a more cohesive and strategic way. This should include, but is not limited to the activities of Boston Harborfest/July 4, Boston Arts Festival, Gospel Fest, Caliente (Latin Music), Boston Urban Music Festival, Hip Hop Festival, Mayor's Holiday Spectacular, First Night Boston, Open Studios, Paint Box, and performances by Commonwealth Shakespeare Company on the Boston Common.

## IMPLEMENT

1) Office of Arts and Culture: Shape a new, stronger, and adequately staffed Office of Arts and Culture:

- a) Appoint the Chief of Arts and Culture as a cabinet-level position.
- b) Play a central leadership role as convener, knowledge provider, and network builder to strengthen communities through arts, culture, and heritage activities.
- c) Conduct a thorough assessment of current MOATSE programmatic activity with a goal of focusing existing resources where they can provide maximum benefit.

- d) Move Tourism and Special Events to a different department.
- e) Fundraise from federal and state sources to augment city support for arts and culture.
- f) Co-lead a public cultural planning process with leaders in the arts, philanthropy, and business community that creates a vision for a culturally vibrant Boston (see below).
- g) Allocate General Fund money to support the core functions and activities of the Office.
- h) Work with the Commission on Affairs of the Elderly to find ways to better support Boston's mid-to-late career artists. Address issues such as age bias in the arts sector, support for artists to continue creating work, mentorship of young artists by master artists, and planning by artists to establish estate and legacy plans for their creative work.
- i) Establish and promote the Office of Arts and Culture as a model of teamwork and collaboration, both internally and externally. Facilitate coordination among arts education programs offered by the creative community.
- j) Enhance the city's website to include inventive social media access using tools such as Four Square, Facebook, and Twitter to help promote the Boston arts and culture sector in ways that have been successful in cities such as Philadelphia.

2) Include arts in marketing Boston: Convene

tourism and cultural promotional partners (GBCVB, MOTT, MCCA, Massport, ArtsBoston, etc.) to develop cohesive strategies that will elevate the arts when promoting the City of Boston and Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

## DREAM

- 1). Increase national and international exchange among artists and arts leaders: Include artists and arts leaders as part of Boston's sister cities programs and trade exchanges.
- 2) Encourage cross sector arts strategies: Community development corporations, human service providers, and civic organizations are ideally situated to support and increase community-based arts activity. The city can help them adopt arts strategies. In the longer term, private companies can be required to develop and implement arts strategies as a condition of receiving city contracts.
  - a) Appoint practicing artists to serve on all city commissions, housing agencies, advisory boards, and citizen boards.
  - b) Integrate public art, visiting artists' programs, artists-in-residence programs, and arts programs into all of the city's programs.
- 3) Integrate the arts across sectors. The arts can be pivotal to achieving several top city priorities. Empower the Office of Arts and Culture to facilitate a process of collaboration between arts and other areas such as the departments associated with:
  - a) Transportation, by including artists' input into project design and street beautification

policy and projects

- b) Neighborhood Services, in the design of Little City Halls and support for arts events
  - c) City archives, which should be more accessible and encouraged to collaborate with the public libraries, the Boston Public Schools, and the higher education sector as well as with artists and the arts community.
- 4) Develop and launch a large-scale, comprehensive branding campaign for Boston's entire arts sector.
    - a) Build a multicultural, multigenerational promotional campaign that can be customized by different subgroups and individual artists
    - b) Address deep-seated concerns regarding cultural inequality and the legacy of racism by representing the arts community as an inclusive, diverse, and safe place







where people can come together to create, experience, and enjoy activities together.

- c) Encourage people to explore the city and go beyond the “comfort zones” of their own neighborhoods.
  - d) Secure significant media assets, including outdoor, transit, and digital platforms that Boston can leverage to communicate its brand. Use these new outlets to augment existing city-owned platforms such as street lights and neighborhood street banners.
  - e) Promote seasonal activities, including events on City Hall Plaza, neighborhood festivals, public art, and Open Studios, to showcase the best Boston has to offer.
- 5) Make the arts central to human services. Recognize and support the role of the arts in human development, trauma recovery, and political empowerment. This work will require both funding and a willingness to rethink traditional divisions of expertise and policy oversight. Areas of potential impact include
- a) Public Safety through arts-based diversionary programs and a more collaborative, less adversarial approach to street art.
  - b) Public Health using the arts to raise awareness of public health issues and addiction rehabilitation.
  - c) Social services work with communities of identity including youth, elderly, communities of color, women, LGBTQ, people with disabilities, immigrants, and veterans.
- 6) Create a competition for The Next Great Festival. Invite members across the Boston community to generate innovative ideas for signature arts events. Create an open competition and implement the winning entries.
- 7) Establish Boston Arts Festival 2.0: a multi-day, large-scale, city-sponsored arts event
- a) Create a significant, community-driven



festival that reflects the diversity of Boston's neighborhoods and provides a larger, integrated platform for all the other events for which the city is currently responsible including Gospel Fest, Caliente (Latin Music), and the Boston Urban Music Festival.

### **FOCUS 3: THERE IS A SHARED AGENDA AMONG ARTS AND CULTURAL SECTOR STAKEHOLDERS**

The existence of a master cultural plan will enable the arts and culture sector to identify opportunities and gaps, and to set priorities. An inclusive and participatory process will build capacity within the sector, setting the stage for ongoing dialogue and helping to ensure that the plan is being implemented and, if needed, adjusted to meet changing realities.

#### **KEEP**

- 1) Mayor as Convener: The city has an essential and unique role to play in fostering conversations among artists, their advocates and partners inside and outside the sector.

#### **IMPLEMENT**

- 2) A comprehensive and inclusive plan for Boston's arts and culture sector: Initiate a citywide public engagement process led by the mayor that will identify goals and strategies for the arts and culture sector to grow, integrate, and foster economic and human development in the city.
- 3) A standing advisory committee on the arts: Take full advantage of the Working Group's past efforts and organize a proactive committee of arts leaders to facilitate meetings and networks across the sector, including every art form, culture, and community.
- 4) Annual arts summit: Host an annual State of the Arts summit hosted by the advisory committee and the Office of Arts and Culture to support accountability, build shared visions and community, and create an opportunity for celebration.
- 5) Create a comprehensive Arts and Culture web portal:
  - a) Promote all cultural events with a comprehensive online calendar, possibly in partnership with existing media listings.
  - b) Provide online services for the permitting process and information about fair labor standards and the use of city parks and real estate for temporary arts installations and performances.
  - c) Support the design and implementation of a dynamic social media and internet strategy promoting arts activities that include

everything the city has to offer. Improve the channels of communication and awareness among city departments about arts events and activities.

- d. Highlight free and low cost performances throughout the neighborhoods to ensure all Bostonians have access to arts.

## DREAM

- 1) National and international conferences: Create conditions in which Boston is a top tier choice to host national and international arts and culture conferences that incorporate local artists and performances as part of their conference agendas, including the annual meetings of Americans for the Arts, Dance USA, Opera America, Theater Communications Group, International Society of Performing Arts, Music Educators, Grantmakers in the Arts, etc.
- 2) Partner with MCCA and hotels: Integrate the marketing and sales efforts of MCCA and Boston hotels for large scale arts events



(festivals, public art projects) to increase tourism.

## FOCUS 4: THE CITY OF BOSTON DEDICATES ADEQUATE RESOURCES TO FINANCE THE SECTOR'S PRIORITIES

### KEEP

- 1) Boston Cultural Council: Retain the Boston Cultural Council as a grant-making agency.

### IMPLEMENT

- 1) Match the Massachusetts Cultural Council funding of the Boston Cultural Council at a minimum one-to-one level in the first year of the administration.
- 2) Individual BCC Artist Grants: Make individual artists eligible for Boston Cultural Council's grants.

### DREAM

- 1) Invest in the arts and culture sector
  - a) Establish a Percent for Arts program, dedicating one percent of all private and public development projects as a permanent fund for the arts and culture sector.
  - b) Increase dedicated funding in the city budget until Boston ranks as one of the top five cities nationally for per capita funding of the arts and culture sector.
- 2) Create an Innovation Fund for the Arts

- a) Consistent with Boston's prowess in the areas of medicine, research, and technology, where there is funding for experimentation and "cutting edge" work, create an Innovation Fund for the Arts to encourage more experimental art across all disciplines. The Fund could also support larger scale public art activities and other strategies for bringing the arts to people in unexpected ways outside of concert halls, galleries, museums or theatres.
  - b) Appoint a superintendent who is committed and dedicated to the arts and who will champion the BPS Arts Expansion Initiative.
- 2) Partnership with Edvestors: Work in tandem with Edvestors to ensure that arts and culture are an important component of the curriculum.
  - 3) Boston Arts Academy (BAA): Continue to promote the institution as a model of excellence and employ the school and its students to advance arts and culture throughout the city. Promote employment of BAA graduates as ambassadors for Boston's creative sector.

## **FOCUS 5: ALL BOSTON'S RESIDENTS, ESPECIALLY OUR CHILDREN, HAVE ACCESS TO THE ARTS**

Participation in arts and culture events and performances must reflect the diversity of Boston's residents. It is particularly important to foster the engagement of young people in creating, performing, and in taking part in our city's cultural institutions and activities.

### **KEEP**

- 1) BPS Arts Expansion Initiative: Continue the Initiative and challenge BPS to fulfill its mandate.
  - a) BPS Arts Office and the Office of Arts and Culture should continue to coordinate their efforts to ensure that the implementation of arts initiatives in the school system is a priority.

- 4) Parks and Recreation: Parks are where many residents experience the cultural life of the city. Encourage the city's Parks and Recreation Department to continue to host and facilitate a range of cultural activities. In park revitalization efforts, continue to include artists in the design process and to commission public art, such as in the current proposal for Town Field in Dorchester.
- 5) Neighborhood-based offerings (festivals, parades, performances): Make the vital role that the network of artists and arts institutions play in keeping the city connected and making its diverse neighborhoods accessible explicit to the public.

### **IMPLEMENT**

- 1) Boston Public Schools:
  - a) Hire a BPS superintendent committed to increasing the amount of in-school, quality arts experiences for young people at all grade levels.

- b) Insist on the addition of the arts throughout all BPS curriculums. Ensure that the transition from STEM to STEAM is achieved in Boston schools.
  - c) Establish Art Pathways throughout BPS. Leverage and promote the arts programs for Boston high school students and teens offered by local colleges, universities, and nonprofits.
  - d) Support the Boston Youth Fund and arts and cultural organizations that offer summer employment for youth.
  - e) Expand the Mayor's Mural Team into the Mayor's Public Art Team so that young people can work on public art projects, performances, and events with professional artists and receive training in art entrepreneurship and innovation including administrative, office, writing, and fundraising skills.
  - f) Partner with Boston arts organizations to provide more free programs and free admission for teens, and work with Boston artists of all disciplines to provide additional programming for the BPS system.
- 2) Arts in all the parks: Plan beyond individual events and parks to create a citywide program of cultural activities in designated "Arts Parks" offered to youth, adults, and seniors alike.
- DREAM**
- 1) Neighborhood Libraries: Ensure our neighborhoods have public libraries that can also serve as gathering places and showcases for local artists and as venues for neighborhood performances and exhibits.
- 2) Improve access to the arts for all Boston children and families:
- a) Develop an "arts map" by neighborhood so that residents know what's available.
  - b) Organize an "arts access card" to encourage families with young children to visit museums and attend art exhibits, concerts, and theatre productions.
  - c) Develop an arts event database with a robust social media component that is accessible to families seeking programs for their kids outside of school time.
- 3) Connecting the city with institutions of higher education:
- a) Connect existing city databases to the new arts database to leverage a network of college performing arts programs and opportunities.
  - b) Engage college students as mentors for BPS students interested in the arts.
  - c) Promote opportunities to showcase college-level Boston artists.
  - d) Establish an annual arts career fair, bringing together Boston's many cultural organizations to present career networking opportunities for high school and college graduates and for young artists hoping to live and work in Boston.

## Arts & Culture Working Group

### Co-chairs

- Gary Dunning, Executive Director, Celebrity Series of Boston
- Cuong Hoang, Director of Programs, Mott Philanthropic

### Members

- Marie-Hélène Bernard, Executive Director/CEO, Handel and Haydn Society
- Kathy Bitetti, Artist, Curator, Co-Founder of MA Artists Leadership Coalition
- Eoin F. Cannon, Lecturer in History and Literature, Harvard University
- Carole Charnow, President and CEO, Boston Children's Museum
- Bob Couture, Vice President/Chief Negotiator, Boston Musicians' Association
- Amit Dixit, Executive Director, South Asian Arts Council
- David Dower, Director of Artistic Programs, ArtsEmerson
- Rosanne Foley, Communications and Social Media Manager, Upham's Corner ArtPlace
- Ifé Franklin, Arts Educator
- Edmund Barry Gaither, ED and Museum Director, National Center of Afro-American Artists
- Melissa J. Graham, Managing Director, Boston City Singers
- Lucas H. Guerra, Principal/Creative Director, ARGUS
- Tito Jackson, Boston City Councilor
- Hubie Jones, Dean, Boston University School of Social Work, Boston Children's Chorus, Social Entrepreneur in Residence
- Joyce Linehan, Director, Ashmont Media
- Derek Lumpkins, Executive Director, Discover Roxbury
- Christine McMahon, Executive Director, Claddagh Fund (Dropkick Murphys)

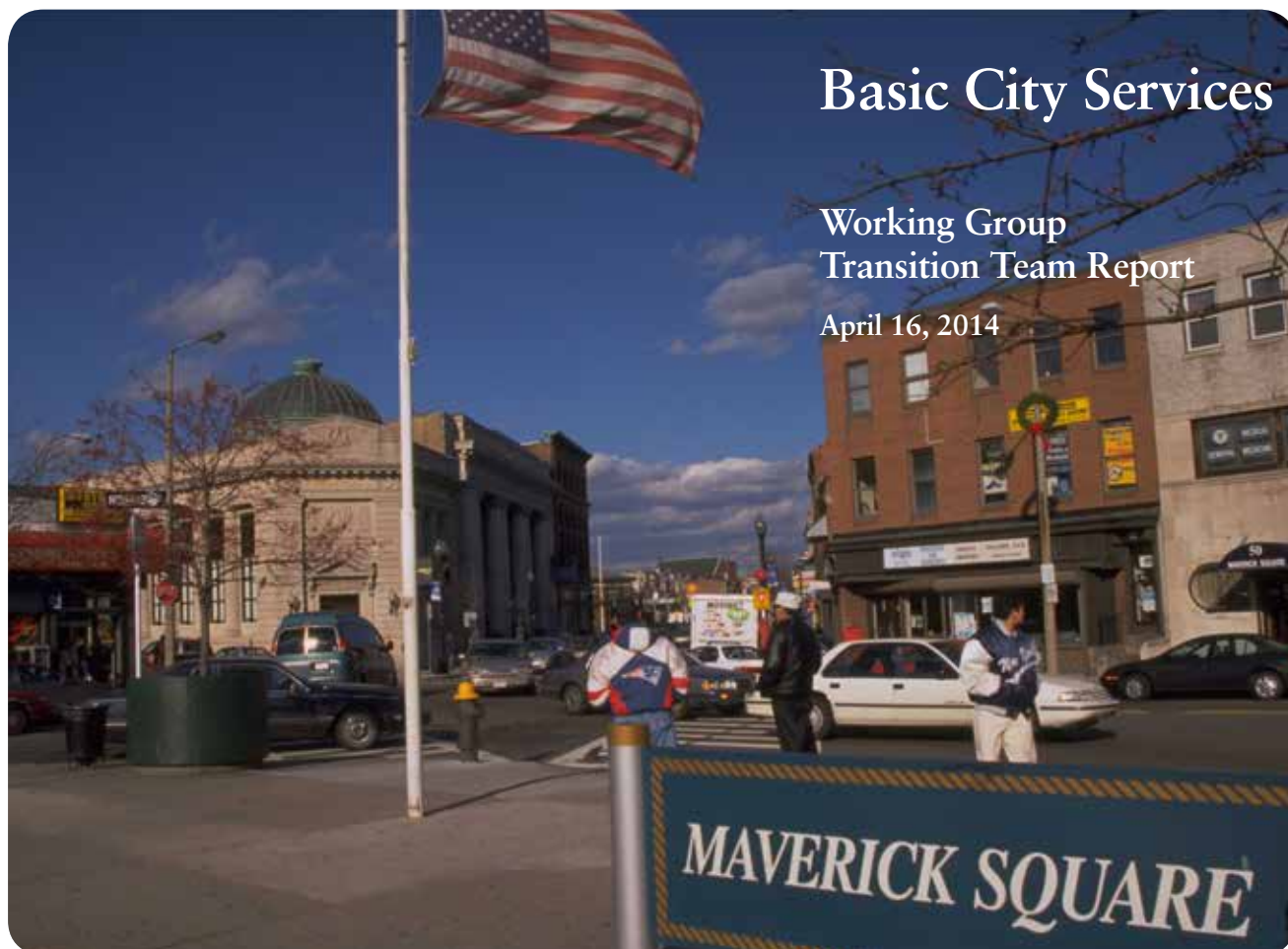
- Kim Noltemy, Chief Marketing and Communications Officer, Boston Symphony Orchestra
- Gladys Oliveras, Founder, Casa de la Culture
- Destiny Palmer, Adjunct Teacher, Boston Arts Academy
- Catherine Peterson, Executive Director, ArtsBoston
- Deborah Porter, Founder/Executive Director, Boston Book Festival
- Bruce Rossley, Former Commissioner, Mayor's Office of Arts and Humanities
- Gabrielle Schaffner, Executive Director, Fort Point Arts Community

### Staff Support

- Charles McEnerney, Jamaica Plain resident

Organizational titles and affiliations are provided for identification purposes only.





## Basic City Services

Working Group  
Transition Team Report

April 16, 2014

Photos: Kit Pyne





“How do we make basic city services more responsive to the needs of residents, businesses and institutional users, whether with regard to quality or cost-effectiveness?”

## INTRODUCTION

Basic city services refer to the essential services provided to all of Boston’s neighborhoods, businesses, and residents. These services include but are not limited to infrastructure improvements to the city’s streets and sidewalks, snow removal, tax collection, and business and building permitting for health and safety from various city agencies, along with other issues.

Addressing the issues in basic city services is essential to a well-run city. Under Mayor Martin J. Walsh’s Administration, the City of Boston should elevate the delivery of basic city services to businesses and residents with the goal of becoming a more customer friendly, innovative, transparent, and accountable city. The City of Boston can achieve this vision through the active engagement of committed

public employees, utilization of advances in technology, and following best practices from around the country.

The Walsh Administration must retain services and programs that exceed expectations, and work rigorously to accelerate the effectiveness and responsiveness of those services in need of improvement to better serve the residents and businesses of Boston.

## THE PROCESS

Mayor Martin J. Walsh asked the Basic City Services Working Group, “How do we make basic city services more responsive to the needs of residents, businesses and institutional users, whether with regard to quality or cost-effectiveness? And what can Boston city government do to make it easier for residents to access basic city services? You should feel free to interpret these questions broadly, to encompass not only public-facing services, like trash pickup, but also basic systems or processes such as procurement.”

The Basic City Services Working Group recognized that it could not deeply engage in the issues of all departments across the entirety of city services. Over the course of three Working Group meetings, the Open Town Meeting, public hearing, and evaluation of written testimonies from the public, the Working Group identified five themes that were identified as our top priorities as areas for improvement.

The five focuses are:

1. Neighborhood inequity in the delivery and accessibility of basic city services

2. Inconsistency and lack of communication among departments and agencies
3. Accountability
4. Business-friendly promotion
5. Technology improvements

1. Inequity in Basic City Services: Many city residents perceive that there is inequity in the delivery of basic city services to some of Boston’s underserved neighborhoods. Residents cite inequity in the delivery of infrastructure improvements, maintenance of public assets and street ornaments, and the level of attentiveness to neighborhood streets. For example, some residents felt that neighborhoods such as Chinatown and Upham’s Corner do not receive the same level of services as central neighborhoods and districts such as Back Bay and Downtown Crossing. However, some Working Group members argue that these well-known neighborhoods receive less than standard basic city services as well.

2. Communication: There is widespread agreement among members of the Working Group that improved communication between city agencies and departments will improve basic city services. Testimonies submitted at the Public Hearing, statements by city staff, and personal experiences among Working Group members described a serious lack of communication between departments and agencies.

The Working Group recognizes that city staff members are extremely attentive, hardworking, and perform to the best of their abilities given the resources and the system under which they work. Lack of communication may be the result of a combination of a bureaucratic structure,





the lack of a technology infrastructure that could speed up decision-making, insufficient collaboration among city departments, and the apparent inability of departmental staff to make on the spot decisions.

Consideration should be given to moving the licensing board staff to the same building as the permitting staff at 1010 Mass Avenue. Currently, business owners must visit separate agencies in different locations for the same license. Housing the licensing board staff within the 1010 Mass Avenue building will improve communication and decrease this cumbersome

process for businesses owners.

3. Accountability: City officials involved with the delivery of basic city services should be held directly accountable for the effective and efficient delivery of such services to businesses and residents. The Working Group believes that in order to improve accountability, departments should have access to technology that would collect all necessary data, track a project's workflow and status, make that information visible to everyone involved in the process, and make the data available to the public.
4. Technology: The Working Group recognizes that the City of Boston has made investments in technology improvements and upgrades to systems, such as the Boston Administration Information System (BAIS), which has improved the city's integrated financial and human resources management system, in recent years. The Working Group also notes the work underway to improve the city's Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system for the public safety departments. However, the Working Group believes that other departments providing basic city services could improve through the use of advanced and innovative systems. To this end, the Working Group strongly advocates a thorough examination of the technological capabilities and systems available to these other departments, and the establishment of groups that can identify specific areas with potential for improvement.
5. Business Friendly City: Both small and large businesses play critical roles throughout the city's neighborhoods. The Walsh Administration should encourage more business owners and entrepreneurs to operate businesses within

the city. Through the appropriate City of Boston agencies, the administration should communicate that Boston is a city that is open to all businesses and provide new businesses with high caliber customer service throughout its departments. Programs and support for entrepreneurs should align with a comprehensive campaign that welcomes and makes it easier for individuals to start and open a business.

The delay in city permitting for small businesses is an egregious example of poor quality city service. The Working Group collected a number of horrific stories about the costly financial burden on small businesses waiting for appropriate zoning and city permit approvals from the city. An improved process for small businesses permitting is a high priority. The Inspectional Services Department Working Group has provided detailed recommendations to improve the inner workings of the department. However, in conjunction with the ISD Committee's recommendations, a public campaign and a dedicated resource such as a Small Business Help Center will reflect Boston's aspiration as a city that welcomes all types of businesses.

## THE RECOMMENDATIONS

### FOCUS 1: TECHNOLOGY

Providing basic city services requires keeping pace with system upgrades and new innovations to meet city

departmental objectives and ever-increasing public expectations. Boston is positioned to meet this goal. Recognizing the importance of a technology strategy that balances innovation with efficient day-to-day operation, the Walsh Administration should achieve the following technological goals:

- 1) Work to eliminate unaddressed issues in maintenance and documentation of existing IT systems
- 2) Better coordinate the city's civic innovation and operational efforts
- 3) Create a more appropriate and maintainable IT structure
- 4) Ensure best IT and software development practices are in use
- 5) Create better, more usable technologies for civic engagement
- 6) Maintain role as leader in civic innovation

### KEEP

- 1) Support The Mayor's Office of New Urban Mechanics: Continue to support the New Urban Mechanics office and recognizes its role as regional and national leader in civic technology and citizen engagement.
- 2) Collaborate with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council: Continue to collaborate with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council and other partners to play a prominent regional leadership role.



## IMPLEMENT

- 1) 3-1-1 SYSTEM: A 3-1-1 system should be implemented to provide a one-stop call center for all non-emergency questions. The system can also divert non-emergency calls from the 9-1-1 system. Such a system can greatly improve basic city services questions for many residents and businesses.
- 2) Conduct IT Audit: Launch an organization-wide IT audit to resolve outstanding technology concerns and reduce technical debt.
- 3) Collaboration between New Urban Mechanics and DoIT: New Urban Mechanics and DoIT should collaborate more closely.
- 4) Create City Chief Data Officer: Create a dedicated data department, led by a new City Chief Data Officer (CDO). The CDO will provide a central policy coordination role:
  - a) Increase use and visibility of data portal
  - b) Create a standard process for fulfillment of Freedom of Information Act requests
  - c) Produce a strategic roadmap for enterprise data management and governance
  - d) Represent DoIT in interactions with vendors to protect the integrity and value of the city's data assets
  - e) Act as a visible spokesperson for city data efforts including addressing any privacy concerns
  - f) Coordinate city efforts around data transparency, including collaboration at the regional and national level.

## DREAM

- 1) Increase resources for The Mayor's Office of New Urban Mechanics: New Urban Mechanics should have more dedicated resources for innovation.

## FOCUS 2: BUILDING DEPARTMENT

The slow speed for approvals for simple business permits, strict requirements and interpretation of building codes for minor home improvements, the multiple department locations between 1010 Massachusetts Avenue and related agencies at City Hall, and poor quality customer service have created an overcomplicated and frustrating experience for many residents and businesses. A working group should be created to help streamline this process and suggest further improvements. The Inspection Services Department Committee has also made specific recommendations in a separate report.



## KEEP

- 1) Online Permitting System: The system allows for the processing of building permits for non-structural construction on homes.

## IMPLEMENT

- 1) A Menu System: This system would inform customers about the necessary permits, forms and documents that are needed for each permit.
- 2) Greeters: At City Hall offices, greeters should approach and assist members of the public. This staff, made up of existing staff members can be deployed flexibly during high traffic times.

- 3) Increased Bilingual Staff: This would enable better communication with a culturally diverse public and improve service.

- 4) Additional Computer Equipment: Add computer equipment so that more staff members can review plans.

- 5) Highlight Department Success: Success replicates success. The department should be recognized for its achievements.

## DREAM

- 1) Fully Implement The Hanson System: The Hanson system integrates city departments and enables them to conduct business online . Fully implementing this system would improve productivity, increase document storage



capacity, and provide better customer service. The administration should review and take immediate action to implement this system across all departments.

- 2) Business Friendly Campaign: Conduct a public campaign that sends the message that Boston is a business-friendly city.

### FOCUS 3: INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure represents the backbone of the city and is essential for the functioning of our society and economy. Continued investment in the city's

streets, sidewalks, utilities, and community assets has a direct impact on the economic health and well-being of Boston. To ensure the safety and security of the city while promoting Boston's continued prosperity, the Walsh Administration should continue to reinvest in infrastructure throughout all of Boston's neighborhoods.

#### KEEP

- 1) Citizens Connect: Citizens Connect has been a useful means for the public to report non-



working infrastructure, but improvements must be made to ensure accountability and timely responsiveness.

## IMPLEMENT

- 1) Coordination of Street Furniture: Similar types of furniture would help improve the street corridor view. This includes lighting, trash receptacles, and types of sidewalk designs, signage, and bus shelters. The goal should be to create a consistent view corridor.
- 2) Upgraded Handicap Ramps: Current handicap ramps collect and trap trash and dirt.

## DREAM

- 1) Greater Equity in Infrastructure Improvements To Neighborhoods: Resolve the perception that certain neighborhoods are favored over others. A plan should be created to identify neighborhoods in need of updated street infrastructure.

## FOCUS 4: RECYCLING

Improved recycling can improve the quality of life, drive down city costs, and contribute to the sustainability of the city. The City of Boston lags behind other cities in the Commonwealth in its recycling practices. A working group should conduct a thorough review of the city's recycling program.

## IMPLEMENT

- 1) Review Trash and Recycling Contracts: Update pay metrics and performance criteria. As the city is in the process of issuing new Requests for Proposals (RFPs), a thorough review should include the most up-to-date the recycling practices.
- 2) Review Recycling and Trash Collection Policies: San Francisco, CA and Gloucester, MA are examples of cities with well-respected recycling and trash practices. A working group comprised of current city workers should conduct a study to improve the City of Boston's practices on recycling and trash removal.
- 3) Institute An "Organics" Recycling Practice: The Commonwealth has implemented new regulations to encourage organic product recycling. Organic recycling is the collection and recycling of household materials including most food debris, cardboard materials, and yard waste. The materials list can include most items that are biodegradable.

## FOCUS 5: CITYWIDE CLEANLINESS

The City of Boston provides garbage collection and snow removal, yet depends upon business owners and citizens to clean the public way. The City of Boston's Ordinance 23-5 states that "the owner or person in

control of any premises within the City shall at all times maintain the sidewalks, alleys, streets, and places adjoining the premises free of trash, refuse, rubbish, or debris...” This ordinance is not enforced consistently, nor is it enforced on a citywide basis.

## KEEP

- 1) Snow Emergency Removal Policies and Program
- 2) The Hokies Program: This neighborhood street cleaning program should be upgraded to use newer equipment to maximize the effectiveness of the staff over a larger area. While effective, the program is labor intensive.

## IMPLEMENT

- 1) Enforce Ordinance 23-5 to Promote Cleaning Accountability: Businesses and residents must be informed about their responsibility for maintaining cleanliness in the public way. The city must define who is responsible for cleaning under and around waste barrels and new boxes and hold such persons accountable. The city should orchestrate an anti-litter campaign.
- 2) Redefine Department Performance Measures: Public works performance measures should be redefined, to measure the cleanliness of the area, not the amount of garbage collected.
- 3) Performance Measures: The Public Works

Commissioner should communicate these measures to people doing the work and management should be held accountable for quality controls. Incorporate CQI (Certified Quality Index) in which a neutral party conducts a monthly audit of performance measures.

## DREAM

- 1) Sanitation Districts: Establish high trafficked districts where city sanitation workers take ownership for an area’s cleanliness and are empowered to sweep, collect garbage, and write code violations.
- 2) Trash Collection Coordination: Coordinate trash collection and street cleaning schedules so that they occur in tandem wherever possible. This way, cars parked elsewhere for street cleaning will enable trash collection to occur more quickly with less impact on traffic. Street cleaners working later that day can sweep debris left behind and clean close to the curb.

## FOCUS 6: LOCALIZED/ DECENTRALIZED BASIC CITY SERVICES

The Working Group heard concerns about issues of inequity in the delivery of services to different neighborhoods, the need to depoliticize the process, and issues surrounding accountability.





Localizing essential basic city services brings city services directly to city neighborhoods. For some residents and neighborhoods, making the trek to City Hall or 1010 Massachusetts Avenue can be time consuming and inconvenient, especially given the lack of public transportation to 1010 Massachusetts Avenue.

## KEEP

- 1) The Boston Main Streets Program: The program should be expanded to include localized business services with additional assistance from the city.

## IMPLEMENT

- 1) Quarterly Neighborhood Meetings: The Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services should host quarterly neighborhood town hall meetings to better understand the demands for basic city services. Commissioners and department heads should attend the meetings.



## DREAM

- 1) Create Little City Halls: The delivery of basic city services could be conducted through a caseworker model, where public staff members could take an issue and bring it through the city process from beginning to satisfactory completion. The city should identify three to six staff members who can serve as caseworkers for any resident seeking basic city services. The staff should have strong computer skills and multiple language skills. Local libraries could serve as existing facilities to host, deliver, and complete these services. The caseworker model will humanize Boston's delivery of basic city services. Some issues that these "Little City Halls" should handle include:
  - a) Concerns about trash removal, snow removal, cleanliness, calls regarding a lack of heat, streetlights, permits for parking, and block parties.
  - b) Job opportunities within each neighborhood, including youth summer jobs.
  - c) Marriage and dog licenses. Community meetings, substance abuse meetings, and youth activities.

## Basic City Services Working Group

### Co-chairs

- My Lam, Founder/Manager, Escazú Development
- Rosemarie Sansone, President, Downtown Boston Improvement District Corporation

### Members

- Frank Baker, Boston City Councilor
- Pat Brophy, Associate Director of Community Affairs, Harvard University
- William (Buddy) Christopher, Principal Architect, Roche Christopher Architecture
- Maura Doyle, Clerk of the Supreme Judicial Court
- Leo Fahey, Business Manager, Pipefitters Local 537
- Tomás Gonzalez, Statewide Campaign Director, Massachusetts Communities Action Network
- Beverly Hillaire, Owner, A Sweet Place
- Gilbert Ho, IT Business Analyst, Commonwealth of MA IT, Office of the State Treasurer
- Amanda Kennedy, Animal Control Officer, Arlington Police Department
- Meg Mainzer-Cohen, President, Back Bay Association
- Dianne Morad, Government Affairs Consultant
- Jerome Smith, Chief of Staff to Senate President Therese Murray
- James Taylor, Professional Painter
- Sam Tyler, President, Boston Municipal Research Bureau
- Sean Wheeler, Software Engineer
- Rob Woodson, Community Liaison

### Staff Support

- Ellen McDonough, South Boston resident

Organizational titles and affiliations are provided for identification purposes only.



# Inspectional Services Department paper presented to the Basic City Services Working Group

## INTRODUCTION

The Inspectional Services Department (ISD) is comprised of five regulatory divisions and exists to administer and enforce local building construction, repair, and maintenance regulations as defined by the state building code as well as enforce local zoning regulations. Its focus is on commercial and industrial buildings, housing, health sanitation, and safety regulations.

However, to make ISD as effective and efficient as possible, we must create a culture of service and problem solving that seeks to protect life and safety, the very purpose of the regulations and, therefore, ISD itself.

Today, ISD has a few bright spots, most of which are outstanding staff members. Most of the systems in place need adjustment to



perform as they should. There are various ways to move toward this goal and we have outlined some of those here.

## THE PROCESS

This team was asked to review the overall experience of various constituencies that interact with ISD. In general terms, they are residents and homeowners, contractors, developers, and architects.

While each of these groups engage with ISD differently, their overall experience is typically one of frustration, a sense of inefficiency, and the general impression that employees are unhappy.

Mayor Martin J. Walsh's pledge to bring access, accountability, collaboration, and transparency to city government is especially applicable to ISD. Our team has developed some recommendations for the mayor, all of which address one or more of those goals.

The members of the ISD Working Group have appreciated this unique opportunity to take a fresh look at ISD, as well as the experiences of the people who work there and those it serves.

We hope the observations and recommendations contained in this document will begin a dialog that seeks to identify what is and isn't working at ISD. Our intention is to continuously improve the delivery of services and enforcement of standards that protect the life and safety of the people of Boston.

## THE RECOMMENDATIONS

### FOCUS 1: NAVIGATING ISD

When visitors enter 1010 Massachusetts Avenue, the building that houses ISD, the first person they encounter is a security guard. The confusion only grows from there as most people need to go past Counter 1 and start at Counter 2. This intimidating and counterintuitive experience at the entrance to the department continues throughout their visit.

This experience is mirrored in visits to the website, where there is plenty of excellent information, but no easy way to find it, and no contact person identified who can answer questions.



## KEEP

**The ISD Website:** The ISD website has a great deal of helpful information, but needs to be improved to be more user friendly. There is also a bank of computers located at the agency allowing visitors to look up information or apply online. These computers are helpful and should be retained.

## IMPLEMENT

**Way finder:** ISD should implement a “Wayfinder” system similar to that in a hospital, with color-coded lines on the floor to help people find the correct locations to address their particular concerns, such as “residential short-form (non-structural) permits” or “plan review,” etc.

**Computer Monitors:** We propose the installation of computer monitors throughout the public areas of the office. Members of the public will be able to scroll through pertinent information about fees, required documents, etc. We suggest the office assign a “facilitator” or “navigator” to approach people who seem unsure of where to go and to ask them, “How can I help you?” At least one such facilitator should be stationed near the bank of computers to assist visitors in navigating the online process. One of the monitors should scroll a short “orientation/welcome video” to familiarize visitors with the various divisions of the department.

**Signage:** Improve signage throughout the department to reduce confusion.

## DREAM

Reorganize and redesign the website, adding

translation capability and graphics to help reduce language and literacy barriers, and reorganize the information to make it easier to find. Improve the online application process, adding a “live chat” option for visitors requiring assistance. Implement a process for securing permits in “satellite” locations, such as Little City Halls or public libraries.

## FOCUS 2: PERMITTING PROCESSES

Current permit application, review, and approval processes are opaque and convoluted. Oftentimes, there are differing interpretations of the building code that, although they may be minor, trigger a secondary lengthy process at the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA).

Homeowners who seek simple, non-structural permits for residential properties interact with ISD less often and may need more support than a developer whose regular duties include ISD transactions. However, as Boston seeks to secure more new business development, it is reasonable to expect that unfamiliarity and potential language barriers will become increasingly challenging.

Once an application is submitted (with one exception being a short-form, non-structural permit that is usually granted the same day), there is no way to check on its status pending a decision. In cases where more than one agency



“touches” a project, such as Water and Sewer, the Health Division, Fire Department, et al., the applicant may not know how to secure or to sequence the requests for signoff, and has no way of knowing at which agency their application is currently “under review.” The difficulty of the process has created an incentive for workarounds. It can be easier and less costly for people to risk working without a permit than to submit to the process. The risk to life and safety this situation poses is of utmost concern, and the revenues never collected in permitting fees exacerbate enforcement difficulty by further limiting the city’s financial resources.

The process takes entirely too long, months in many cases, which loses the developers and the City of Boston money in the form of lost tax revenue, delays, and increased costs. Inordinate delays only serve to further incentivize the avoidance of the permitting system altogether.

## KEEP

Fast Track program: Identify exceptionally effective staff and involve them in discussions about changes to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency of processes.

## IMPLEMENT

Checklists and Video Tutorials: Create simple guides for one- and two-family homes and small business (as defined by the Building Code) Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA), with meetings to be held on Saturday mornings. Checklists exist on the ISD website for various types of projects. These lists lay out the documentation needed and are very helpful, but difficult to find. Improvements to the website should separate various types of permits and list documents and fees required to submit an

application. We must display the lists in a place that is easily found by a newcomer, since that is who will need to rely on them most.

Develop brief video tutorials for various types of permits, run them on a loop on ISD monitors, and post them to the website and on social media. Institute a “pre-screening” process to flag issues early, so that applicants have a better sense at the front end of the process of what to expect and how to address early concerns. Create an internal board to review code interpretation disputes to avoid triggering the ZBA process where possible. In cases where a variance is clearly needed or a dispute cannot be resolved at the agency level, the ZBA remains an available remedy.

## DREAM

Tracking Software: Identify, secure, and implement a software solution to be used across all permitting agencies to process and track permit applications, including site plans and other supporting documents. With processes tracked from start to finish, timelines can be better estimated and planned for, useful data can be collected to evaluate performance, and customers can have some sense of the status of their applications.

## FOCUS 3: MORALE/STAFF SATISFACTION

Morale at ISD has been historically and infamously low. Moreover, the computer system they have (Hansen) is used by



only a fraction of the staff and at varying levels of proficiency. The software itself does not track dates well, which is a critical element of any tracking software. Fiefdoms and an uneven culture require a significant shift in the way staff members are assigned, trained, and empowered.

## KEEP

**Human Resources:** There are many dedicated and knowledgeable people working at the department and they represent its most valuable resource. We recommend inviting existing staff to participate in exercises designed to improve operations at ISD even as the Walsh administration begins to implement its goals and objectives.

## IMPLEMENT

**Training:** A personnel training system that includes updates to regulations and codes as well as best practices and customer service training. Provide opportunities for cross training, both in the classroom and on-the-job to improve knowledge and relationships within the agency, creating skills redundancy within the department and ultimately, a better customer and staff experience. Small changes, like improvements to signage and asking staff to begin conversations by asking how they can help will begin to establish a culture of solution-seeking and service. The goal is to change the atmosphere of ISD to one that treats residents and businesses as customers to be courteously served and treats staff as knowledgeable and professional. Seek staff input on a regular basis and be open to constructive criticism.. It is especially crucial to get feedback from the staff most directly affected by changes in operations. Assign personnel to tasks or roles

based upon qualifications and personal areas of interest wherever possible. Identify and enforce minimum qualifications for jobs that impact life and safety.

## DREAM

Implementation of a universal permitting/tracking system will facilitate communication and coordination among all permitting agencies to improve performance, deliver customer satisfaction, and reduce frustration among staff. A good system will also measure performance in meaningful ways, relying on positive outcomes rather than on apparent “busyness” to achieve benchmarks.

## ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

- 1) Public art should be included in the development of all major projects.
- 2) Promoting public awareness of current health issues, environmental, programs available.
- 3) Review the Rental Re-inspection program to be sure its goals are correct and achievable. The review should be done with diverse set of stakeholders, including the tenant groups, community developers, and public health advocates.
- 4) Implement interdepartmental marketing of programs and procedures.
- 5) Organize the entire review process (throughout the city) to focus on customer satisfaction and public safety.



# Animal Care and Control paper presented to the Basic City Services Working Group

## INTRODUCTION

Members of the Basic City Services Working Group were interested in the issues of animal care and control and chose to form a subgroup. Below are their recommendations for the restructuring of the existing Boston Animal Control Department.

## THE RECOMMENDATIONS

### FOCUS 1: CHANGE NAME OF THE EXISTING DEPARTMENT TO ANIMAL CARE AND CONTROL

As stated in the mayor's campaign policy papers, the department





should be renamed to reflect that 21st century “animal control” is not just about control, but ensuring quality care to animals. Animal Care and Control is a more inclusive name. This change can occur without any immediate change in services but will signal the changes ahead.

We recommend that the department be transferred to report to the Public Health Commission. This will link animal health and safety with public health. This change is in keeping with the “One Health” movement that acknowledges the interdependence of human,

animal, and environmental health.<sup>1</sup>

Many Massachusetts city and town animal control departments report to their local boards of health. This is also the case in larger cities. For example, the Thomas J. O’Connor Animal Care and Adoption Center in Springfield, Mass. (<http://www.tjoconnoradoptioncenter.com/tjo/>) reports to the Health and Human Services Department. Nationally, animal care and control in Washington D.C. reports to the Department of Health (<http://doh.dc.gov/service/animal-services>), New York City animal care and control is under contract with the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) (<http://www.nycacc.org>), Baltimore animal control reports to the City of Baltimore Health Department (<http://www.baltimorehealth.org/animalcontrol.html>), and Columbus, Ohio animal control reports to the Public Health Department (<http://publichealth.columbus.gov/animal-insectcontrol.aspx>).

## FOCUS 2: APPOINT OR HIRE A DIRECTOR

The mayor’s policy goals will not be met without a significant overhaul of the Department of Animal Care & Control. That must start with new leadership.

The department has been without a permanent leader for years. In the short term, the mayor may choose to appoint an interim director with animal control experience to oversee an audit of services, staff performance, and capacity. The search for a

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.avma.org/KB/Resources/Reports/Documents/onehealth\\_final.pdf](https://www.avma.org/KB/Resources/Reports/Documents/onehealth_final.pdf)



new director should start immediately.

### **FOCUS 3: TEMPORARILY SUSPEND REHABILITATION OF THE BUILDING AT 26 MAHLER ROAD IN ROSLINDALE**

Stray and surrendered animals are housed at the City of Boston animal control shelter facility in Roslindale. There are currently plans to renovate portions of this facility. We recommend any implementation of such plans be put on hold until a new director is hired and the evaluation (below) is completed.

### **FOCUS 4: CONDUCT A DETAILED AUDIT PROCESS**

Conduct an audit, supported by a task force of animal welfare practitioners with expertise in animal control enforcement, shelter management, and veterinary medicine.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> There are organizations that perform such services (see, for example, The Koret Shelter Medicine Program (<http://www.sheltermedicine.com/node/6>), Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program (<http://sheltermedicine.vetmed.ufl.edu/shelterservices/shelter-health-assessment/>), and The Humane Society of the United States Shelter Services ([http://www.animalsheltering.org/how-we-help/strengthen-your-shelter/shelter\\_services\\_1.html](http://www.animalsheltering.org/how-we-help/strengthen-your-shelter/shelter_services_1.html))).

This audit should produce a comprehensive report with recommendations for:

- 1) Restructuring the department, developing positions to reflect the goals of the department and creating job descriptions for these positions
- 2) Determining the comprehensive needs for animal care and control services in the City of Boston
- 3) Evaluating employees and removing those who have proven to be ineffective and/or detrimental
- 4) Assessing needs and developing plans for staff training
- 5) Assessing departmental data on animal intakes, disposition, quantity and types of calls for services, citations issued, etc.
- 6) Developing effective Standard Operating Procedures for field services and shelter services including strategies to reduce the average length of stay for animals in the facility and improved internal processes to reduce the euthanasia of behaviorally and medically healthy animals.
- 7) Determining areas of program needs that can be achieved collaboratively with the Animal Rescue League of Boston (ARL), the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (MSPCA), other organizations, volunteer rescue groups, and individual volunteers.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> For example, this could include sharing lost reports through the shared database, Chameleon, referring citizens to services provided by the ARL or MSPCA (low-cost spay/neuter) and transferring animals between facilities.

8) Ensuring collaboration across city agencies including police and emergency services.

## **FOCUS 5: APPOINT AN ANIMAL CONTROL COMMISSION**

Consistent with the City of Boston ordinance 7.9.1 (attached), the mayor should appoint members to the Animal Control Commission (we would suggest changing the name when the ordinances are updated; see section II). This would provide immediate support to the city in its initial process of making changes to the services provided as well as ongoing input by outside observers. This change will help ensure that there is adequate support and expertise to execute and sustain longer term initiatives.

## **FOCUS 6: TASK THE CITY'S DEPARTMENT OF INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY WITH CREATING ONLINE LICENSING/PET PORTAL CAPABILITY.**

This is important not just for ensuring dogs are returned to owners, but also because it will create revenue and be of value to all dog owners. We believe it would be useful to explore the ability to process complaints online (e.g. barking dog, loose dog) via Citizens Connect or a new process.

A Pet Licensing Coordinator could assist the city in achieving targeted goals for licensing of dogs in Boston. The current number of dogs residing

in the City of Boston is unknown, but estimates range from 52,000 (using geographic information system or GIS online portal) to 87,644 (using the American Veterinary Medical Association dog ownership estimate tool). An increase in licensing in the first year would generate targeted revenue to support the program. Satellite licensing agents (in addition to the City Hall To Go and/or "Little City Halls") such as veterinary clinics or adoption organizations that can license a dog before he or she goes home would be a further benefit. See Pet Licensing Coordinator example from Seattle at <https://www.seattledogspot.com/blog/dog-blog/post/pet-licensing-saves-lives>.

## **FOCUS 7: MOVE DIRECTOR AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF TO THE SHELTER**

Currently, the director of Animal Control and two staff members work at City Hall. It is difficult to be an effective leader and mentor when operating from an office remote to the team carrying out animal care and control work every day. This move will enable the department to be more cohesive and allow the director to have first-hand knowledge of staff and animal issues and needs. It also encourages multi-tasking and a sense of shared responsibility.

## **FOCUS 8: ENSURE THAT THE CITY'S ORDINANCES AND PRACTICES COMPLY WITH STATE LAW AND ARE EFFECTIVE AND APPROPRIATE FOR ANIMAL CARE AND CONTROL SERVICES IN BOSTON.**



**FOCUS 9: PROVIDE FEE STRUCTURE AND BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS WITH A GOAL OF EXPANDING PROGRAMS AND STAFFING.** <sup>4</sup>

**FOCUS 10: PROVIDE DEPARTMENT-WIDE STATE APPROVED TRAINING, WORKING WITH THE ANIMAL CONTROL ASSOCIATION OF MASSACHUSETTS AND THE NATIONAL ANIMAL CONTROL ASSOCIATION.**

<sup>4</sup> For example, other comparable cities have higher per capita spending on animal control. San Francisco = \$3.75/per capita public spending; Miami - \$4.34; Los Angeles = \$5.30; Denver = \$4.63; Dallas = \$5.38; Phoenix = \$3.06. Source: Companion Animals and Chicago Communities: A Strategic Assessment for the City of Chicago, DePaul University, Chaddick Institute for Metropolitan Development, March 2012, p 9. Available at [http://las.depaul.edu/chaddick/docs/Docs/Companion\\_Animal\\_Final\\_Report\\_030310.pdf](http://las.depaul.edu/chaddick/docs/Docs/Companion_Animal_Final_Report_030310.pdf).

**FOCUS 11: EVALUATE STAFF BASED ON NEW OPERATING PROCEDURES AND TRAINING.**

**FOCUS 12: EVALUATE AND IMPLEMENT A STANDARD PRACTICE FOR CITATIONS FOLLOW UP AND COURT PROCEEDINGS.**

The law enforcement departments of the Animal Rescue League and the MSPCA may provide appropriate training. The Animal Care and Control Commission should explore if it would be worthwhile to create a standing MOU with these organizations. This is an example of one way these nonprofits contribute to the city in lieu of taxes.

**FOCUS 13: BEGIN IMPLEMENTING ITEMS FROM THE POLICY BRIEF UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE ANIMAL CONTROL COMMISSION, INCLUDING EVALUATING DOG RECREATION AREAS AND THE CURRENT ORDINANCE GOVERNING THEM. EXPLORE INITIATIVES TO CREATE MORE ANIMAL-FRIENDLY HOUSING.** <sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Boston Housing Authority policies may be one way to easily open up more animal-friendly housing. For many years, the MSPCA ran a “Pets in Housing” program that helped establish guidelines and workable pet policies in multi-unit housing (public and private) with success.



★ MAYOR ★  
**MARTIN J. WALSH**

**BOSTON**2014  
TRANSITION COMMITTEE



## Energy, Environment & Open Spaces

Working Group  
Transition Team Report  
April 16, 2014

Photos: Kit Pyne







“What can Boston city government do—whether by itself or in partnership with others—to make Boston a national ‘green leader?’”

## INTRODUCTION

As part of Mayor-elect Martin J. Walsh’s transition committee, the Energy, Environment, and Open Space Working Group, co-chaired by John Barros and State Senator Linda Dorcena Forry and led by Amos Hostetter, chair of the Green Ribbon Commission, and Alex Bok, former general counsel of clean-tech leader Boston-Power, discussed and solicited input from the Boston community of residents and businesses along with a large number of interested groups.

## THE PROCESS

In considering what existing programs to Keep, what new initiatives or expansions to Implement and what goals to Dream to aim for, the mayor-elect asked the Energy, Environment,

and Open Spaces Working Group, “What can Boston city government do – whether by itself or in partnership with others – to make Boston a national ‘green leader?’ You should feel free to interpret the term ‘green’ broadly, whether to refer to climate change, energy efficiency, or other sustainability issues or, alternatively, open space and public spaces in the sense of parks and amenities.”

Representing a cross-section of Boston’s resident, activist, and business community, the Energy, Environment, and Open Space Working Group identified some key themes emerging from the January 7, 2014 public hearing at English High which was attended by over 200 residents and activists, two well attended Working Group sessions during the mayor-elect’s citywide town meeting in December 2013, and the Boston14.org website. These themes, though not exhaustive, serve as a starting point to help guide the Walsh administration as it puts forth its policy initiatives related to energy, environment, and open space.

## THE RECOMMENDATIONS

### FOCUS 1: CLIMATE ACTION & CLEAN ENERGY

Boston is recognized as a national leader in responding to the challenges of global climate change. The city has set goals and taken action to reduce our carbon footprint, to spark innovation and growth in the

region’s clean energy economy, and to prepare Boston for the consequences of a changing climate. The Working Group recommendations are designed to continue the city’s national leadership on climate action and take it to another level:

- 1) Continue to focus on achieving the interim goal of a 25% reduction in GHG emissions citywide, and to develop and implement innovative policies and programs that can be replicated in cities across the world.
- 2) Prepare to achieve the long-term mitigation goal of an 80% reduction in emissions by 2050.
- 3) Implement a comprehensive climate preparedness strategy that retains the city’s resiliency and vitality under even the most extreme conditions of potential climate impacts.

### KEEP

- 1) City Climate Action Plan Team and Strategy:  
The city has a strong team in place, a good first generation Climate Action Plan, and a plan in place to update its Climate Action Plan in 2014. The team leads three efforts: Greenovate Boston, an innovative engagement strategy to connect a critical mass of Boston residents to practical climate action; Renew Boston, a unique partnership between the city and investor-owned utilities (NSTAR and National Grid) for the co-delivery of energy efficiency



home and business improvements; and a strategic energy management function that has achieved the city target of a 25% reduction in city-government generated greenhouse gas emissions seven years ahead of schedule. Boston's Performance Dashboard is a useful tool to help track and monitor these efforts and should be continued.

- 2) Boston Green Ribbon Commission: The Green Ribbon Commission (GRC) and its working groups have provided valuable private sector leadership to support the city's Climate Action Plan. It can serve as the foundation for

additional public/private partnerships in support of climate mitigation and preparedness.

## IMPLEMENT

- 1) Regional Climate Summit: Boston and neighboring municipalities face common challenges when it comes to managing climate impacts such as sea level rise (SLR) and coastal flooding. We recommend that Mayor Walsh convene a regional climate preparedness summit in partnership with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the EPA, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, and other regional planning authorities to begin the dialogue about how the region can collaborate on climate preparedness. We further recommend that a key focus of the summit be on aligning federal, state, and municipal climate preparedness strategies.
- 2) Climate Action Plan Update: The Walsh administration should reaffirm its support for the 2014 Climate Action Plan update and highlight it as a priority for 2014, engaging the entire community in climate action while pushing for aggressive targets and interim benchmarks. Successful implementation of the Climate Action Plan requires agencies that control assets, programs, and regulatory review processes internalize and adopt the specific targets of the Climate Action Plan. We recommend that the mayor issue an updated executive order directing all city agencies to appoint a liaison to develop strategies that support meeting Climate Action Plan targets and collaborate with Energy and Environment Services and federal and state agencies to mitigate climate change and make Boston a more resilient city.

- 3) District Energy: District Energy and Combined Heat and Power (DE/CHP) offer many untapped opportunities for greenhouse gas reductions and energy savings. Boston should aggressively pursue its strategy for developing a DE/CHP plan for the city, starting with the Innovation District.
- 4) Short Term Resiliency and Adaptation Planning: We recommend that the mayor propose a suite of city policies and programs to support short-term actions to help the city and property owners protect their assets and neighborhoods against climate impacts. These should include actions such as hiring a director of climate change preparedness; conducting a citywide climate vulnerability assessment; development of preparedness guidelines and incentives for new and existing residential and commercial building owners to harden, move or lift key utility and building assets; and new building restrictions in flood zones.
- 5) Neighborhood and District-Scale Resilience Planning Pilots: We suggest the administration launch a pilot climate resiliency district project to help understand climate preparedness at the neighborhood and individual resident level.
- 6) Higher Education Climate Partnership: Our region is home to some of the world's best research universities with enormous knowledge on issues of climate action. We recommend that the mayor convene the presidents of our major research universities and explore the development of a climate preparedness partnership with the city to bring their knowledge to bear on best practices for coastal cities. The partnership could also help position Boston as a national center of excellence in this field.
- 7) C40 Membership: Boston is considering joining C40 – a global network of “mega-cities” working on climate action and led by former New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg. In the first 100 days, we recommend that the mayor announce Boston’s intention to join C40 and use that announcement to highlight the city’s commitment to international leadership on climate action.
- 8) Fund Greenovate in the City Budget: Greenovate is currently entirely grant funded. We recommend that the program and its budgeted staff be fully supported by the city.

## DREAM

The 2014 Climate Action Plan update includes a “2050 and Beyond” planning process to work on long-term climate mitigation and adaptation. As part of this process, the Energy, Environment, and Open Space Working Group recommends:

- 1) Carbon Neutrality: The City has a long-term goal of an 80% reduction in emissions by 2050. In 2014, the mayor should announce a major new carbon neutrality initiative in partnership with the region’s world-class research universities to create practical “roadmaps” to achieve the 80X50 goal in key emissions sectors (power, transportation, buildings, water/waste, land use, etc.).
- 2) Net Zero Buildings: The city should “lead by example” and work with other large property owners (the federal government, commonwealth, Massport, and others, who collectively own 25% of the city’s non-residential property) to get all public property in the city to Net Zero by 2030.
- 3) Resilient Boston: Long-Term Climate





Preparedness: Building a city resilience strategy that enables our region to continue to prosper and grow under increasingly severe changes in climate will require fundamental redesign of our urban form over the next four decades. We do not have the analytical, civic decision-making, zoning/land use rules, and investment structures in place to take on this challenge. Mayor Walsh should launch a Resilient Boston initiative to explore the kinds of public/private partnerships and governance changes that will be needed to establish this social infrastructure.

- 4) Make Boston a National Leader in Clean Energy Finance: Boston has both 1) the presence of leading clean tech, finance, insurance, and

real estate industry expertise and 2) the need for clean energy financing beyond conventional government subsidy programs to help achieve Boston's goals for energy efficiency and clean energy property improvements. We recommend the mayor take two actions to support Boston's leadership in clean energy finance.

**Access to Clean Energy Capital:** The mayor should support state legislative approval of Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE), an innovative financing program that is already working well in Connecticut. Under C-PACE programs, loans to finance energy efficiency or renewable energy improvements are repaid through property tax payments and remain an obligation of the property owner. Similar to a sewer tax assessment, capital provided under the C-PACE program is secured by a first lien on the property, so low-interest, long-term capital that matches the lifecycle of the improvement can be leveraged. Capital can either be raised through government bonds that are secured by the property tax repayment, or from private lenders that accept the C-PACE securitization and payback framework. The mayor should work with the Green Ribbon Commission and the major banks in Boston to make this program available to dramatically expand the payment options for energy efficiency and other clean energy improvements.

**Boston as a Global Center of Excellence in Clean Energy Finance:** Boston is home to many innovators in the financial sector who are driving a restructuring of global capital markets to create a prosperous, low carbon future. This represents an opportunity to nurture the development of a clean energy finance cluster in the region. The mayor should work with the

Green Ribbon Commission, private equity funds, major asset holders and managers, lenders, insurers, leading NGOs like Ceres, and our business schools to support the evolution of Boston as a global leader in clean energy finance.

- 5) **Expand Access to Energy Efficiency and Solar for Renters and Low-Income Residents:** The majority of Boston residents (65%) live in rental housing. Many of these residents are low to moderate income families who face multiple barriers to accessing weatherization, energy efficiency, and clean energy programs. The administration should continue to invest in Boston's nationally renowned Renew Boston program with an increased focus on expanding all residents' access to pre-weatherization, energy efficiency, and clean energy programs. This can be accomplished through continuing partnerships with the utilities and agencies like Action for Boston Community Development and the Mass Energy Consumers Alliance, as well as working with community-based organizations with the knowledge, skills, and trust necessary to break through language, cultural, and institutional barriers. The Walsh

administration should also aggressively leverage the city's Homeworks Program and Rental Housing Inspection Ordinance to seriously promote assessments of all cost-effective energy efficiency opportunities.

- 6) **Make Every School Green and Healthy, a Showcase of Climate Action:** Our children spend most of their time indoors, often in Boston Public School (BPS) facilities that are in significant need of upgrades. Making BPS facilities green and healthy will not only help provide our children with the environment to thrive, but can also inspire them to understand climate action by learning from the buildings themselves. Energy efficiency investments often pay for themselves over a short period of time by reducing operating costs and energy bills. The administration should require BPS to undertake an assessment of all BPS facilities and accelerate investments in energy efficiency and clean energy technologies like solar where feasible. The administration should ensure that all BPS facilities have comprehensive recycling infrastructure to advance Zero Waste goals. BPS' green cleaning and healthy facilities programs should be expanded. All BPS facilities should have interpretive displays that showcase how the facility is green, healthy, and contributing to the Boston's climate action goals, and inspire actions that can be taken at home and in the community. To accomplish these goals, the administration should require the School Committee and Superintendent make Climate Action a priority in its capital plan and keep the USGBC grant funded position of Sustainability Manager position in the Superintendent's office.



Photo: Kit Pyne



## **FOCUS 2: PUBLIC OPEN SPACE: PROTECT AND EXPAND PARKS, BEACHES, AND OTHER OPEN SPACE AREAS FOR RECREATION AND ENJOYMENT**

The future of Boston lies in its parks and open spaces. Our parks bring people together, diffuse social pressures, educate and strengthen our children, cool our planet, keep us healthy, and add economic value to our endeavors. They can become a powerful organizing force for advancing our city's image.

Boston's connection to parks and open space began with the creation of the very first public park in America – the Boston Common—and expanded with Frederick Law Olmsted's Emerald Necklace. Boston also boasts new park models: the Boston Harbor Islands Recreation Area, the Southwest Corridor and Rose Kennedy Greenway atop transportation corridors, and the heavily used ball fields of West Roxbury's Millennium

Park, built on a landfill. Boston has the most community gardens per capita of any other U.S. city. Our new mayor can build a name for our city by taking green space to the next level. Together we can reinvent and restructure Boston's parks and open spaces for 21st century living by: (1) Making Boston a world leader in the quality, scope, and innovation of its public open spaces; (2) Utilizing all outdoor resources—city and state owned parks, bikeways, streets and sidewalks, playgrounds and schoolyards, transportation corridors, community gardens, plazas, vacant lots, green roofs, institutional and commercial open spaces, urban wilds, and the Harbor, with its HarborWalk, islands & public beaches in East Boston, South Boston, and Dorchester—to bring a wide range of outdoor opportunities and experiences to all Bostonians; and (3) Increasing investment in our parks and open space planning, programming, operations, and capital needs through all possible funding avenues.

### **KEEP**

- 1) The high quality of our open space: Examples include: (1) reliable and consistent park maintenance; (2) the city's goal of planting and maintaining 100,000 new trees by 2020 to increase the tree canopy from 29% to 35%; (3) the Grassroots Program in Department of Neighborhood Development (DND) that provides capital funds to create or upgrade new community gardens and parks; and (4) Beautify Boston grants for neighborhood park improvements.
- 2) Valuable outdoor programs that promote recreation, education, health, employment, and the arts, including summer jobs for teens, ParkARTS, NeighborWalk, Boston R.O.C.K.S.

summer youth programming, and the Mayor's Cup sports tournaments.

- 3) Park partnerships: Boston open space partners run the gamut from park friends' groups and nonprofits to state and federal agencies. Continue to use these relationships to enhance our parks, open spaces, and public beaches by: (1) encouraging joint projects and programming and (2) using the city's "bully pulpit" to improve parks not controlled by the city, such as the Rose Kennedy Greenway and DCR properties.

## IMPLEMENT

- 1) Fully utilize the Mayor's existing tools to improve the quality of Boston parks and open spaces.
  - a) Recruit a strong, creative Parks Commissioner with national urban parks connections and knowledge of best practices to build a modern, innovative Parks Department. Involve the Parks Partners and "friends" groups explicitly in the process.
  - b) Pass the Community Preservation Act.
  - c) Simplify procedures for turning vacant DND and BRA (Boston Redevelopment Authority) lots into open space. The current system is unwieldy and non-transparent.
  - d) Create a special Boston Public Schools (BPS) schoolyard maintenance fund and hire an advocate to maximize the investment of the Boston Schoolyards Initiative that restored 88 BPS schoolyards.
- e) Eliminate bureaucratic barriers to make it easier for park partners to bring resources, maintenance, and capital improvements to Boston's open spaces, parks and beaches.
- f) Make the 2014 Open Space Plan a more specific, action-oriented document to drive future-looking parks and open space creation & restoration.
- 2) Spend More Time Outside! Jumpstart a Boston-wide mayor's campaign with small grants, new programs, activities in parks, inter-agency leadership, and lots of programs for all ages. Involve community organizations, expand Hubway, and provide outdoor experiences for all BPS students.
  - a) Make "Circle the City": a city-sponsored monthly event to bring bicyclists and pedestrians onto a major boulevards, like Memorial Drive on Sundays in Cambridge.
  - b) Boston Moves for Health. Recruit local



Photo: Kit Pyne





fitness leaders to bring yoga, line dancing, tai chi, boot camp, and Zumba to parks across the city.

- c) Sponsor outdoor summer concerts and movies that everyone can look forward to in a signature park in every neighborhood.

### 3) Quick and Visible Improvements:

- a) Bring park permitting online accompanied by transparent facility calendars. Easy-to-implement models exist in Brookline, Cambridge, and many other cities. Create a multilingual outreach program to ensure non-English-speaking communities can access parks.
- b) Focus park capital improvements in areas with high levels of income disparities & chronic disease.
- c) Recycling in parks: Resolve contract issues to expand the Boston Common pilot program.

- d) Promote Urban Farming: Implement Article 89 and incorporate urban agriculture initiatives into new and existing developments, including the use of rooftops, land owned by nonprofits, universities, school districts, and the city.

- e) Large event venues: Make full use of City Hall Plaza and other public venues to lessen the impact of big events on parks, especially the Boston Common and Franklin Park.

- 4) Ensure new open spaces will be built in the future: While development pressures are cyclical, recent experience demonstrates how quickly a neighborhood (e.g., the Seaport) can change in a boom economy. Immediate plans should be undertaken for:

- a) The Waterfront: Commission a group of city planning and design experts, independent of the BRA, to recommend optimal open space and active recreational uses of the few remaining undeveloped waterfront parcels, especially in the Seaport, East Boston, North End, and the Harbor Islands, and to protect

view corridors to the harbor in these areas.

- b) Allston Projects: Harvard expansion and Mass. Pike relocation: Develop a comprehensive plan and implementation strategy, including government funding and Harvard's promised Public Realm Flexible Fund, for open spaces related to I-90 improvements and Harvard expansion (e.g., Rena Park, Smith Field, and the grove of trees at the Charlesview development site).
- c) Fairmount Line Corridor: Plan new open spaces in Dorchester, Mattapan, and Hyde Park; host a competition to create outdoor "living rooms" as destinations for neighbors and transit riders.

5) Continue and accelerate major park and open space improvement projects: Including but not limited to:

- a) The South Bay Harbor Trail: This project connects Roxbury with the waterfront which is 40% complete, with 100% of the design completed and all funds allocated.
- b) Muddy River Phase II: Advocate for continued full federal funding of Phase 2 of the Muddy River restoration project in the Fenway.
- c) East Boston Greenway: Complete the final section to Constitution Beach.

## DREAM

Make Boston's urban parks and open spaces #1

- 1) Invest: Allocate a minimum of 1% of the city

budget (currently at 0.7%) for parks and open space to properly fund operations, innovative planning and capital projects.

- a) Make parks more livable: Install water fountains in every park. Add lighting and play fountains where feasible. Build bathroom facilities in parks. Add bike racks.
- b) Community Gardens: Commit to support and expand gardens through Parks Department staff and funding. Hire a community garden liaison.
- c) Urban Wilds: Provide maintenance, capital and program resources to realize the potential of these unique areas.

2) Cross the Aisle: Work with other levels of government to fully realize the potential of our new and existing large, signature parks.

- a) DCR (Department of Conservation and Recreation) parks: Create a seamless park system for Bostonians. Collaborate to end duplication resulting from two park management systems. Begin with manageable steps, e.g., joint Citizen Connect, park permitting systems, and shared landscape expertise.
- b) Harbor Island parks: Bring adventure to families by making the islands accessible and affordable.
- c) Rose Kennedy Greenway: Support adequate annual funding commitment from MassDOT, and resolve long-term conservancy lease issues.
- d) Charles River Underpasses: Support

pedestrian/cyclist underpasses at bridge crossings for an uninterrupted 7-mile path (Allston – Museum of Science).

3) Tackle Big Ideas, Projects, and Improvements:

- a) Uncover Charlesgate, the connection between the Emerald Necklace and the Esplanade, currently covered with a series of overpasses. Bring city life to ground level, as is being done across the country.
- b) Keep building and add to linear parks like HarborWalk and the Neponset River Greenways that connect to our blue spaces.
- c) Hire dedicated park managers for the largest, most populous parks: Craft 21st century management plans for individual city parks.

### FOCUS 3: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE,



Photo: Kit Pyne

### HEALTH, AND TRANSPORTATION

Boston has been a leader in ensuring that all of its residents have access to clean air, water, and land. Many neighborhoods have organized themselves and worked with city environmental and public health agencies to ensure that everyone has a healthy environment and access to environmental benefits. Despite progress, there are still neighborhoods that are disproportionately burdened by environmental problems and lack equal access to environmental “goods,” such as access to parks, beaches, open space, clean streets, green amenities, and recreational opportunities.

The Commonwealth’s Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs has adopted an environmental justice policy where, “Environmental justice (EJ) is based on the principle that all people have a right to be protected from environmental pollution, and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment. Environmental justice is the equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies and the equitable distribution of environmental

benefits.” We recommend that the Walsh administration adopt a similar goal, leading to the enactment of an EJ ordinance and other efforts to improve health and transportation.

## KEEP

- 1) Environmental health enforcement: Keep the Boston Public Health Commission’s environmental health enforcement of Safe Auto Shops and Safe Salons programs to protect people and the environment from toxic chemical exposure.
- 2) Rental Housing Inspection Ordinance: This is an important tool to identify and address indoor air quality issues (mold, pests, rats) that contribute to childhood asthma.
- 3) Support for healthy and local food: Maintain support for Office of Food Initiatives and the Boston Public Market. Continue Boston Bounty Bucks, which promotes use of SNAP (food stamp) benefits at farmer’s markets by providing a dollar for dollar matching incentive for all SNAP purchases up to \$10.

## IMPLEMENT

- 1) Strict Enforcement of the State’s “no idling” law while working with state and federal partners to curb idling of vehicles throughout the city. This reduces harmful emissions. Alternatively, pass a more strict and enforceable Boston anti-idling ordinance, potentially dedicating revenue from violation fees to subsidizing the cost of pollution filters.
- 2) Diesel emissions ordinance: Pass a diesel emission reductions ordinance to further reduce emissions pollution and improve air quality. Work to redesign city contracting to incentivize

construction companies to install filters on diesel engines to remove toxins.

- 3) Support the Complete Streets Program and deployment of traffic calming and signal timing measures so as to better manage traffic, reduce emissions from idling vehicles, and protect pedestrians and bicyclists.
- 4) Support the implementation of Article 89, Urban Agriculture Zoning: Prioritize the development of new urban agriculture, with a focus on urban farming, in low income and underserved neighborhoods. Ensure local residents are key participants. Open up the Boston Food Council to include additional stakeholders and increase its transparency and public engagement. Ensure resources for Boston Public Health Commission oversight of the soil safety protocol.
- 5) Environmental participatory budget process: \$1 million from the capital budget and created in the spirit of the city’s current youth participatory budget process. Grassroots assemblies will gather project ideas and elect delegates to work with the city to develop these ideas into proposals. Proposals will be voted on, with those receiving the most votes implemented.
- 6) Green and Healthy City: Establishing a seamless connection between environmental and health programs is critical to a safer and more sustainable Boston. At the highest level, this means integrating Energy and Environment Services’ Climate Action Plan with the Boston Public Health Commission’s “Health-in-all-Policies” framework, using a dual lens of climate and health to design, implement, and evaluate city initiatives. The city should devote particular attention to database management,



targeted marketing, and leveraging the power of community environmental and health partners. This will help ensure, for example, that residents live in well-insulated homes and pay affordable bills while also understanding the importance of smoke-free policies and good air quality within those homes. As noted, permitting reviews, rental inspection, HomeWorks, Greenovate, and Renew Boston are several opportunities to cross-promote programs and track useful information.

- 7) Neighborhood green standards and report card: Create standards and scorecards to ensure equitable access for every neighborhood to green assets: gardens, parks, trees, bike paths, etc.
- 8) Exposure to Toxic Chemicals: Expand programs to reduce chemical exposure and implement a citywide green purchasing policy. Using the model of Boston's Safe Auto Shops and Safe Salons programs, work with dry cleaners or other small business sectors to reduce toxic chemical use and release. Lead by example and shift markets towards safer chemicals by purchasing the safest available cleaning products, furniture, personal care products, electronics, light bulbs, and other products in all city departments.
- 9) Mass Pike Viaduct Replacement/Realignment project: Support the creation of a multi-disciplinary team from the city to collaborate with Allston/Brighton community members and advocacy groups working with MassDOT and Harvard. Planning will advance rapidly in 2014 for this recently announced \$260M MassDOT project that will reshape dozens of acres in Allston. This project has great open space, transportation, and economic development potential.

## DREAM

- 1) Environmental justice: Work with environmental justice leaders to develop and pass an Environmental Justice ordinance for Boston that would establish a process for meaningful participation for all neighborhoods and policies for equal protection and equitable access to environmental benefits.
- 2) U-Pass: Support U-Pass proposal for MBTA-passes paid for by universities (with legislated minimal cost to students) for all full-time college and graduate students in the MBTA service area. These funds should be used to help re-capitalize the MBTA.
- 3) Hubway expansion: Expand Hubway to all Boston neighborhoods if demand is present; expand bike network citywide with safe, sole purpose bike paths where possible. Ensure there are sufficient bike racks at schools so young people can bike to school.
- 4) Increase access to healthy food, schools, medical services, and more by ensuring that every city residence is within a 5-minute walk to a bus or other transit node.
- 5) MBTA: Given the importance of Boston to the MBTA system in terms of riders, stops, and tracks, advocate for Boston to have membership on the MBTA board comparable to MWRA (Massachusetts Water Resources Authority) board.
- 6) Ferries: Expand the existing network of existing transportation between Boston's neighborhoods and between the Harbor Islands, the city, and nearby coastal communities to get people out of their cars and into lower emission, energy efficient ferries.

7) Cultivating a GreenSTEM and Green Jobs Pipeline: We recommend focusing not just on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) but GreenSTEM for the City's youth. GreenSTEM is STEM with a focus on environmental solutions. Environmental solutions are drivers of the 21st century economy. We recommend building a workforce pipeline from our high schools to community colleges and higher education facilities to the clean tech companies in Boston that result in the city's youth being perceived as viable future employees. We also are focused on developing practical ways for Boston workers to participate in and benefit from the growing clean tech and environmental sector, including adults who are interested in moving into this sector as part of a career change.

#### **FOCUS 4: WASTE REDUCTION/ RECYCLING/MATERIALS MANAGEMENT**

Boston should innovate its food and waste systems to grow the local economy. The city currently spends over \$40 million annually on municipal solid waste collection, recyclables processing, composting and disposal contracts, and has a diversion rate well below the national average. Boston manages only residential waste, leaving commercial entities to contract on their own. Five sets of residential contracts cover the

#### **city's five waste districts.**

Every ton diverted from disposal to recycling/composting/materials reuse from the 240,000 tons collected annually saves the city \$56/ton, yet the current diversion rate is under 20%. In addition, as long as the cost of materials management and diversion per ton is less than the tipping cost per ton, these should be encouraged. Almost all of what is not diverted goes to incinerators (waste to energy facilities), which produce toxic public health impacts in host communities, few jobs, and high costs for taxpayers.

#### **KEEP**

- 1) Separate contracts for collection, recyclables processing, composting, and disposal.
- 2) No incentive for volume of waste: The current waste contracts are geographic in nature and rightfully avoid a problematic incentive to increase overall volume of waste collected.

#### **IMPLEMENT**

- 1) Recycling contracts: We recommend extending all current waste, recycling, and composting contracts for at least 6 months, to determine what's needed to increase recycling in a manner that maximizes benefits to all stakeholders. Boston must also resolve key contract problems:
  - a) Use a Request for Proposals process instead of the current Invitation for Bids, allowing for weighing important factors other than lowest price in the final

- decision, such as living wage, diversion efforts, climate concerns, local hiring, etc.
- b) Divide waste and recycling hauling contracts in at least one waste district (possibly the one with the lowest diversion rates) into smaller areas, to encourage smaller local businesses to compete and provide an incentive for community participation
  - c) Apply the Boston Living Wage Ordinance to require safe workplaces, and prohibit use of subcontracted temporary workers in recyclables processing contract language. If no bidders for recyclables processing contracts are currently willing to offer a living wage to workers, the city should make an official commitment to prefer the first qualified bidder willing to do so, providing an incentive for responsible evolution of the industry.
- 2) Embrace a Zero Waste future: The City should set a goal of achieving Zero Waste, and set into motion a public planning process to get there.
  - 3) Expanded Bottle Bill Referendum: The mayor should continue to strongly support an updated Bottle Bill to include non-carbonated beverage containers in order to increase recycling rates and reduce street litter.
  - 4) Organic Waste & Green Economy: Boston should plan to comply with and expand on the state's coming commercial organic waste ban in a way that maximizes the local green economy. The city can pilot residential curbside composting and plan strategically to feed organic waste into composting businesses that in turn supply community gardens and urban farming.
  - 5) Reuse and Materials Management: Designate staff to coordinate expansion of the reuse and repair sector through zoning changes, public education, and technical expertise, keeping usable materials out of the waste stream while growing the local green economy.
  - 6) Schools: Prioritize recycling education and ensure all classrooms and offices are equipped with bins to encourage behavioral shift.
  - 7) Multi-family: Set recycling goals for multi-unit housing and develop educational materials for landlords and managers. Consider incentives or fees based on goal attainment. Consider fines for landlords and housing managers who do not provide ample space for recycling bins, either curbside for smaller buildings or dumpsters for larger properties including those managed by the BHA (Boston Housing Authority).
  - 8) Commercial: Consider ways to stimulate commercial recycling, which comprises well over half of total waste volume, including through city contracting or with a mandate.
  - 9) More pickups: Incentivize recycling by increasing recycling pickups and decreasing trash pickups, particularly in districts with more frequent trash pickup.
  - 10) Reserve new revenue from recycling fees for diversion education and implementation.
  - 11) Change the current practice in the Boston Parks Department so all organic material and woody debris are composted in parks maintenance yards or through city compost sites.

## DREAM

- 1) Zero waste (ZW): Implement a ZW strategy that targets 75% diversion rate by 2030 and ZW by 2050. ZW is a path to sustainability through redesign of production, consumption, and disposal systems that leads eventually to all or almost all waste materials being used to create new materials. A ZW master plan process for Boston could include a wide range of policies, but should take into account the interests of all stakeholders.
- 2) Pilot innovative mechanisms to increase diversion: Before investing in citywide changes, Boston could give promising ideas trial runs in specific neighborhoods. For instance, it could pilot curbside collection of residential organic waste for composting to foster economic opportunity and serve urban agriculture while removing climate pollutants from the waste stream. To succeed, such pilots need many of the same supports as full-scale implementations, including community education and technical assistance.
- 3) Enable a culture shift with recycling education: A strong public education program can set the stage for dramatic, long-term improvements in behavior and understanding the value of green policies. Recycling education should be an intrinsic part of a broader sustainability curriculum in schools. It can also be promoted through robust outreach campaigns ahead of policy changes. A volunteer ‘neighborhood ambassador’ network can inform and organize residents at the local level.
- 4) Extended Producer Responsibility: Pass ordinances requiring producers of toxic and hard-to-recycle materials, particularly electronic waste, to take back their products for

appropriate disposal after consumers discard them, as many cities and states are starting to do.

- 5) Replace Existing Trash Cans with dual trash/recycling in schools, city buildings, sidewalks, and parks.

## Energy, Environment & Open Space Working Group

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- Alexander Bok, CEO, Boston Baseball Field of Dreams; Former General Counsel, Boston-Power, Inc.
- Amos Hostetter, CEO, Pilot House Associates; Co-chair, Green Ribbon Commission

### Members

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- Kalila Barnett, Executive Director, Alternatives for Community and Environment
- John Barros, Former Boston School Committee Member, Transition Team Co-Chair
- Kevin Deabler, Principal, RODE Architects
- Patricia A. Foley, President, Save the Harbor/Save the Bay
- Linda Dorcena Forry, State Senator
- Jim Hunt, III, Vice President, Northeast Utilities
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- Mark Mendell, Co-Chairman, Cannon Design
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- Bud Ris, President and CEO, New England Aquarium
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## Housing

Working Group  
Transition Team Report

April 16, 2014

Photos: Kit Pyne





“What can Boston city government do—whether by itself or in partnership with private business, institutional entities, community based groups or others—to expand the city’s supply of affordable housing?”

## INTRODUCTION

Throughout his mayoral campaign, candidate Martin J. Walsh emphasized the importance of housing to the future of this city. Since his election, he has repeatedly said that housing is a “foundational cornerstone for connecting diverse neighborhoods, improving schools and communities, and cultivating civic engagement.” He recognizes, as does the Housing Working Group, that housing must be at the core of a comprehensive effort to promote equity at the neighborhood, city, and regional levels, expand opportunity, enhance the quality of life, reduce economic and educational disparities, and stop violence.

We must connect our housing strategies to other sectors and treat housing as a platform for successful lives and thriving, diverse neighborhoods. We believe that increased

investments in housing will pay big dividends for the city and yield positive outcomes across many sectors—the economy, education, health, public safety, and the environment.

## THE PROCESS

Mayor-elect Walsh asked the Housing Working Group, “What can Boston city government do—whether by itself or in partnership with private business, institutional entities, community based groups or others—to expand the city’s supply of affordable housing so that low-, moderate- and middle-income Bostonians can live in healthy, vibrant neighborhoods, while we continue to provide for homeless people and other vulnerable populations?”

It is widely acknowledged that we must build significantly more housing to meet the needs of our growing city and economy. Much of that housing must be affordable to low- and moderate-income families—and we must preserve the affordable housing that we already have—to meet the demographics of Boston, the incomes of our workforce, and the needs of our most economically disadvantaged citizens. While more housing development at all income levels is critical, new development and improved neighborhoods should not result in the displacement of the very people that helped to create those improvements in the first place. We believe that development without displacement is critical for the city’s future; properly planned, mixed-income development will be essential to avoid displacement of our low- and moderate-income residents over the next decade. This means implementing a housing strategy that is equitable, meeting the different needs of our

diverse neighborhoods and people. We need housing that can stabilize the lives of our most vulnerable residents, to dramatically reduce the scourge of homelessness. We need housing that can serve the needs of students, seniors, young professionals, families, and empty nesters across a range of income levels. We need a housing strategy that supports racial, ethnic, and economic diversity in all of our neighborhoods. We need a variety of housing types from rental to ownership to cooperatives, as well as single family homes, triple-deckers, and multi-family buildings. In the end, Boston will not thrive if it becomes a city just for the rich and poor. We seek to create a city where everyone who wants to live here can: both those already here and those yet to come.

To achieve this vision, Boston will need strong leadership from City Hall. Mayor Walsh has already demonstrated his commitment to provide that leadership. The Housing Working Group embraces his call to create a Housing Partnership Committee. The Housing Partnership Committee should have diverse representation from the housing field both inside and outside of city government, as well as from related sectors such as education, public safety, and health care to assist in linking housing strategy to comprehensive civic improvement. The committee should help refine and implement the recommendations set forth in this report, and provide oversight and monitoring of our progress toward specific multi-year goals. The Housing Partnership Committee can build on the prior administration’s Housing 2020 plan, but include present recommendations that set more ambitious goals for affordable housing development. We echo Mayor Walsh’s commitment to establish specific goals and benchmarks that can be carefully measured and evaluated over time to





ensure that we are making progress and making mid-course corrections as needed.

Mayor Walsh should form an internal City of Boston “Housing Starts and Solutions” commission. The commission would be chaired by the mayor or his designee, and would include representatives from many areas of City Hall, such as the Boston Redevelopment Authority, Zoning Board of Appeals, Department of Neighborhood Development, Boston Housing Authority, Boston Fair Housing Commission, Inspectional Services Department, Transportation Department, Boston Public Health Commission,

Environment Department, Parks & Recreation Department, Boston Public Schools, Elderly Commission, Veterans’ Services and the Chair of the City Council’s Committee on Housing. The commission would meet regularly to discuss housing-related issues and trends.

This commission’s purpose would be two-fold: to increase regular communication between agencies handling housing matters, such as the BRA and DND, and to adopt an interdisciplinary approach to addressing the issues highlighted in this report. An interdisciplinary approach would allow the city to better target housing services and funds to those who would benefit the most. A separate standalone section of this report titled, “Improve Administration of Housing Programs” addresses the need for better communication between the BRA and DND.

As a State Representative, Mayor Walsh stood up for affordable housing. We know that he will continue to do so as mayor, whether it is fighting for a new and stronger inclusionary development policy or standing up for specific new housing development projects in the face of unreasonable neighborhood opposition. It is important that the city use an “equity lens” when making decisions about policy and projects. Such a lens asks how decisions will impact historically disadvantaged people and neighborhoods. We know the mayor will be a powerful voice with the state and federal government and with the private sector to advocate for the resources and policies we need.

## THE RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these tenets, our Housing Working Group Report provides policy recommendations

for Mayor Walsh to Keep, Implement, and Dream about in the following five major areas:

1. Support healthy, stable, diverse neighborhoods without displacement
2. Promote better community planning that meets the housing needs of Boston residents in every neighborhood
3. Reduce and prevent homelessness for families and individuals
4. Expand financial resources for affordable housing
5. Make Boston a national leader in healthy and green housing

We look forward to Mayor Walsh providing the type of collaborative leadership for which he is known, and which is essential to making progress. The mayor should use his office to convene key partners and stakeholders to help us to work together, across silos, sectors, and despite past battles, to achieve our shared vision of a Boston that provides good homes in good neighborhoods for all of its residents.

## **FOCUS 1: SUPPORT HEALTHY, STABLE, AND DIVERSE NEIGHBORHOODS WITHOUT DISPLACEMENT**

As Boston recovers from the Great Recession, we face both opportunities and challenges. The foreclosure crisis has

reduced homeownership rates in our most distressed neighborhoods, increased investor and absentee ownership, and led to skyrocketing rents. As home prices begin to rise, we could see further displacement and disruption in many of our neighborhoods. New development will bring jobs, opportunities, housing, and amenities to our city.

But new development also often brings change to neighborhoods, and if the change is not planned for and efforts are not made to preserve long-term affordability for existing residents, it can lead to displacement. While neighborhoods are continually changing under all economic circumstances, the Walsh administration must use planning and smart housing policy to manage the rate and scale of this change. The mayor's proposed Housing Partnership Committee can help address this issue.

## **KEEP**

- 1) Preserve existing affordable housing: Boston has approximately 40,000 privately owned housing units that have received public subsidies. Several thousand of these are at risk as their subsidies are set to expire over the next five or ten years. The city should continue its pro-active efforts and set a goal of preserving at least 95% of these units by convincing owners to renew subsidies or getting them to sell to



responsible owners who will, including non-profit developers and community development corporations. The city should continue to use M.G.L.c.40T to work with the state to strategically target resources on the most important preservation projects, especially those in neighborhoods with strong rental markets and/or a lack of other affordable housing.

- 2) Preserve public housing: The city should ensure that the Boston Housing Authority is able to maintain its 12,000 homes in good condition with an occupancy rate of at least 98%. Existing BHA properties may offer opportunities for on-site expansion.

- 3) Protect cooperative housing: Cooperative housing is an effective way to maintain affordability and build stronger communities. The city should resist efforts to weaken cooperatives.

- 4) Maintain homeownership education and foreclosure prevention: The city has a strong network of nonprofit organizations that provide high quality homeownership education and foreclosure prevention services. Boston should take proactive steps to ensure that this infrastructure is not only maintained, but that partnerships with the city are deepened. By investing in these organizations, Boston can leverage its limited dollars more effectively and ensure better outreach.

- 5) Enforce Boston Jobs Residents Policy: The city should seek to obtain the goals of the Boston Jobs Residents Policy to ensure that that local residents benefit from the construction jobs and contracting opportunities associated with new housing development in the city. This will enable more local residents to stay in their neighborhoods if they choose to do so.

## IMPLEMENT

- 1) Preventing eviction and foreclosure: The city should step up efforts to reduce unnecessary evictions by expanding pro-bono legal representation of tenants, increasing landlord/tenant mediation efforts, increasing education for tenants and landlords of their respective rights and responsibilities, and providing small amounts of financial assistance to stop evictions caused by very small rent arrearages.
- 2) Review and strengthen fair housing efforts:

Consistent with the new Fair Housing regulations expected to be released by the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development in 2014, the city should undertake a comprehensive assessment of current fair housing efforts to ensure that all Boston residents are free from discriminatory actions and to reduce racial and economic segregation in the city and the region.

3) Acquire existing private housing stock and make it permanently affordable: Boston needs to increase its stock of homeownership and rental options that remain affordable as communities transform. Private parties around the country are buying up homes and renting them out. The city should create a system by which responsible nonprofits, community land trusts (CLTs), and other responsible owners can purchase small multifamily properties in key neighborhoods and build up a stock of affordable units over time, as properties can be acquired on a per unit cost lower than we can create a new unit of housing with subsidies. Key financial players such as banks and foundations could provide a working capital fund for such acquisitions, providing more flexibility and nimbleness in acquisitions than would public funds.

4) Expand home improvement/rehab lending and support: The Department of Neighborhood Development (DND) has operated effective home repair programs for years, assisting hundreds of Boston homeowners to ensure that their properties are safe and attractive. Demand for these programs currently

outstrips resources, yet these programs can be a very cost-effective way to preserve lower cost homeownership and rental opportunities. Existing Weatherization Assistance Program funds should be coordinated with general rehab efforts to stretch the dollars further.

5) Create Business opportunities: The city should develop goals and a strategy to expand opportunities for minority- and women-owned business enterprises to secure contracts on new housing development in all of the city's neighborhoods.

## DREAM

1) Artist live/work housing: The city should explore ways, including zoning changes, to create more artist live/work housing to ensure the city's vibrant artist community can remain in Boston.

2) Create a customer friendly/one-stop interface for residents to access affordable housing resources: Housing services and resources are spread across several city agencies, making it difficult for individuals and families to access the resources they need. New efforts should be undertaken to make processes and programs more accessible and transparent, including the consolidation of waiting lists and marketing lists, and the use of new technology tools to guide consumers towards appropriate housing services. Boston's technology community should be engaged to help the city make shopping for an affordable place to live as simple as the best online shopping experiences.

3) Increasing use of community land trusts: Community Land Trusts (CLTs) are a proven



model for creating long-term affordable housing opportunities—both ownership and rental—and ensure long-term stewardship of the properties. During the foreclosure crisis, CLTs locally and nationally showed a foreclosure rate of less than 1%, and have been an effective tool for supporting development without displacement. The city should develop tools and resources to help CLTs acquire both public and private land so it can be developed in way that creates broad public benefits. Many Boston neighborhoods anticipating development pressures could benefit from CLTs.

- 4) Connect housing to workforce development programs: More Boston families will be able to afford housing in the city if they are able to secure higher paying jobs. Housing providers should be encouraged to work with enhanced workforce development and asset development programs in order to help families move up the economic ladder and stay in Boston.
- 5) Analyze neighborhoods for appropriate planning and development: Planning at the neighborhood level will be critical to the development of new mixed-income housing. Many neighborhoods across the city could handle increased density. A thorough analysis would determine appropriate densities for each neighborhood.

## **FOCUS 2: PROMOTE BETTER COMMUNITY PLANNING THAT MEETS THE HOUSING NEEDS OF BOSTON RESIDENTS IN EVERY NEIGHBORHOOD**

Boston's economic growth and high quality of life is attracting more people and businesses. This creates opportunities and challenges that must be managed effectively to ensure that the benefits of growth are shared and sustainable. We need more effective citywide and neighborhood planning that achieves critical city, regional, and statewide goals while respecting the impact of growth on local neighborhoods and residents.

According to the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Boston needs to create 35,000 to 52,000 new homes by 2030 to meet the needs of our growing and changing population and to at least partially address the serious shortage of affordable housing. With 23,000 low-income renters paying over 50% of their income toward rent, the status quo is not acceptable. While increasing job opportunities and income supports are part of addressing the cost burden, housing production and preservation strategies are also critical to addressing this affordability crisis.

### **KEEP**

- 1) Target resources to those most in need: Boston should continue to target the majority of existing public subsidies to support low-income families with the greatest housing needs. While some members of both the committee and the public support the allocation of subsidies



to create/maintain housing for moderate and middle income families, there is a consensus that the vast majority of city dollars should continue to go to those in greatest need.

2) Sustain strong market rate development:

Boston must keep attracting significant market-rate housing development that can meet the needs of our growing population, ease pressure on the existing housing stock, and generate create the taxes and other revenues needed to produce affordable housing. Where appropriate, higher densities can help lower the cost per unit, making homes less expensive, and more accessible to middle income households.

3) Leverage resources: Boston has an outstanding

track record of attracting significant federal and state resources for the production of affordable housing. Boston's high capacity housing sector is able to successfully compete for these resources and we should maintain our competitive edge.

4) Support nonprofits and CDCs: Boston has one of the strongest networks of nonprofit housing development organizations, including CDCs. These mission-driven organizations are committed to permanent affordability and recycle their earnings back into the community for further public benefit. The city should seek to ensure the continued success of these organizations by targeting them for resources, helping them leverage private, state, and federal



dollars, and partnering with them to achieve shared goals.

## IMPLEMENT

- 1) Complete a market analysis and needs assessment to better understand what it means to be low-, moderate-, and middle-income in Boston's neighborhoods, what the housing needs are by income group and household type, and how this varies by race and ethnicity. This information will enable the city to adjust its planning efforts and allocation of resources appropriately. Generally, state and federal subsidies aid households making 60% or less of area median income (which for a family of 4 in Boston would be those making less than \$56,000.) This means many Boston families cannot afford even an "affordable" apartment, while many others who are also struggling are over the official income guidelines.
- 2) Better community and citywide planning: As part of a top-to-bottom review of the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA), reforms must strengthen the city's planning efforts. Boston needs a neighborhood process that is inclusive, transparent, and respected so that development decisions actually adhere to neighborhood plans. At the same time, these efforts must retain the flexibility to address changing market conditions and encourage responsible development. In addition, existing community task forces and oversight committees need to reflect the cultural, ethnic, income, and

generational diversity of the neighborhoods. Neighborhood plans need to help advance critical citywide goals, such as the production of more affordable and middle-income housing, and increases in neighborhood density. These plans should address racial and economic equity for each neighborhood and consider environmental and health impacts. In short, we need to move from an approach that is ad hoc, reactive, and siloed, to one that is proactive and comprehensive.

- 3) Better agency coordination: To achieve these goals, it is crucial to improve the communication and coordination between and among city and state agencies, including the BRA, the Department of Neighborhood Development (DND), Department of Transportation, MBTA, and others. Furthermore, all of the agencies responsible for permitting (e.g. ISD, BFD, BRA) need to better coordinate the process to reduce time, redundancy, and costs.
- 4) Transit oriented development (TOD): The City should work with the state, MBTA, and MAPC to map its critical transit nodes to determine the development opportunities available and to consider up-zoning and other strategies to leverage these opportunities. Transit locations should be developed as mixed-use, mixed-income areas that capitalize on transit assets. Boston must advocate for the transit improvements that are essential to making TOD sustainable for the long term.
- 5) Middle Income Housing: Over the past decade, the city's population increase has been largely at the low and the high end of the income spectrum, raising the prospect that Boston

could become a city stratified between the rich and the poor. The city needs to develop a comprehensive strategy for creating and retaining a strong middle class through zoning changes, homeownership programs, new development, and other tools. The average Boston schoolteacher heading up a family of four would not be eligible for most subsidies but could not afford the average rent of a two bedroom Boston apartment. While some committee members oppose using public subsidies for middle income households, others believe that this is an appropriate use of limited dollars as part of an overall housing program. In the end, the city's strategy must be carefully developed so that it does not reduce the funds available for housing low- and very low-income families, but rather increases total funding for housing, leverages market tools, and uses shallow subsidies to create economically diverse and stable neighborhoods. One low-cost option would be to provide zoning relief associated with frontage and setback requirements for small houses on small lots to encourage the building of small single and multi-family homes.

- 6) Inventory of Buildable, City-Owned Land: The city should conduct a thorough survey and create a master list of land held by the BRA, DND, Boston Housing Authority, and any other department holding title to land to identify buildable parcels. Applications to develop these parcels for public and affordable housing should be streamlined.

## DREAM

- 1) Student housing: Boston needs to work with its universities and colleges to dramatically increase on-campus housing for both undergraduate



and graduate students. With graduate school enrollments growing quickly and 92% of graduate students living off campus, the city needs to explore innovative ideas for housing this population. One idea worth serious consideration is a privately developed graduate student village that provides housing for students from multiple universities. The mayor should convene university leaders, developers, and state officials to explore this and other options. The city also needs to require that institutional master plans include sufficient on-campus student housing to meet the needs of undergraduate and graduate students.

- 2) Reduce cost of building housing: The city needs to convene key stakeholders to develop a concrete action plan for reducing the cost of housing development, looking at such issues as density, parking requirements, building techniques, design standards, labor costs, permitting, etc.
- 3) Seize large-scale development opportunities: Boston has several opportunities over the next decade to undertake large-scale development in transit friendly locations. The mayor should identify transit-oriented lots across the city, in which high-density, mixed income, mixed use, green developments that utilize the best current thinking in urban planning can be built. The scale and location of these sites should allow for significant income diversity, with the goal of creating housing that is one-third low-income, one-third moderate/middle-income, and one-third market rate.
- 4) Set ambitious goals for affordable housing production: The current Housing 2020 plan calls for 30,000 new homes by 2020, with 5,000 aimed at middle income and 5,000 aimed at low/moderate income households. We should

seek to maintain overall production levels while striving for a more balanced mix of housing for the lower, middle, and higher segments of the market. The Housing Partnership Committee should establish an aggressive, long term affordable housing production goal for the city that will increase projected affordable housing production by 2020 from the 5,000 to at least 6,000 units, or more if possible. This will require more resources (see below), quicker approval times, more density, modified design standards, reduced construction costs, federal and state support, and access to public land.

### **FOCUS 3: REDUCE AND PREVENT HOMELESSNESS FOR FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS**

There is a homelessness crisis in Boston<sup>1</sup>. On any given night, almost 7,000 Bostonians do not have long-term stable housing. Even with an overall improvement in the economy, low and moderate income families and individuals continue to struggle. Indeed, our shelter resources are stretched well beyond their limits, as over 2,000 families across Massachusetts (most from Boston) are housed in motels.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> City of Boston Homeless Census, December 12, 2012. <http://www.bphc.org/programs/esc/homeless-census/Forms%20%20Documents/2012-2013%20Key%20Findings.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Massachusetts Department of Housing and Commu-

Boston has had a lot of success in, ensuring people don't have to sleep on our streets through a range of initiatives which have included increasing the availability of supportive housing, setting up homelessness prevention programs, and requiring a homelessness priority in affordable housing developments. However, more must be done to address homelessness, both in the short- and long-term, with the recognition that individuals and families experiencing homelessness face different barriers to housing stability.

We recommend the implementation of several strategies identified in the recently released "Bringing Boston Home: An Action Plan to House Boston's Homeless,"<sup>3</sup> and have included some of the plan's tactics here as guides for the Walsh administration.

## KEEP

- 1) Keep the homelessness set aside in affordable housing projects: Affordable housing developments that receive funds from the City of Boston are required to set aside 10 percent of units for those who have been homeless. In addition, homelessness is a priority for public housing.
- 2) Continue the efforts to reduce street homelessness, as well as the High Utilizers of Emergency Services (HUES) program: HUES identifies medically frail homeless individuals and places them in permanent supportive housing with the aid of individualized service and housing plans, increasing their stability

nity Development housing stabilization entry data, as of 1/14/2014.<https://hed-dhsentry.azurewebsites.net/default.aspx>

3 The City of Boston Leadership Council on Homelessness (2013).Bringing Boston Home: An Action Plan to Housing Boston's Homeless 2013-2016.[http://www.cityofboston.gov/dnd/PDFs/Bringing\\_Boston\\_Home\\_web.pdf](http://www.cityofboston.gov/dnd/PDFs/Bringing_Boston_Home_web.pdf)

and reducing emergency service and health care costs.

- 3) Continue to provide homelessness prevention programs: Prevention efforts that enable individuals and families to keep their housing reduce the costs to government that homelessness can create. For example, one-time assistance of \$6,000 or less can prevent homelessness while the annual cost of housing one family in a shelter can reach \$43,000 even before taking into account the additional costs of homelessness related to ill health and the need for other services.
- 4) Maintain strong linkages between homeless shelters, supportive housing providers, and alcohol and drug recovery programs: For some individuals, housing stability depends on pathways to recovery, and existing sobriety programs should be maintained.

## IMPLEMENT

- 1) Build on prevention efforts through the expansion of eviction prevention programs: While the city cannot and should not try to prevent all evictions—sometimes evictions are appropriate and necessary to protect other residents and the financial health of the property—steps can be taken to prevent unnecessary evictions. For many households, a small level of financial assistance can prevent an eviction for rent arrearages. In the short-term, we recommend an analysis of court records to determine the number of families that could benefit from such a program. In addition, measures should be taken to prevent unnecessary evictions related to doubling up. Furthermore, innovative approaches to mediation between tenants and property management should be implemented by relying

on strong resident services that serve as a support liaison and advocate. Such programs can help tenants retain their housing and landlords reduce their costs and vacancies.

- 2) Advocate at the state level for additional and more flexible housing resources: The city's resources should be examined so that they can be fully aligned with the Commonwealth's funding. These resources should include
  - 1) additional congregate housing units, specialized to address each of the following: veterans, the elderly, those with a history of chronic substance abuse, and families
  - 2) additional mobile rental vouchers (MRVP)
  - 3) continued efforts and funds to address the immediate housing needs of families transitioning off the HomeBASE program and
  - 4) increased flexibility of RAFT funding to respond to the greater needs (E.g., income profiles) of Boston families in need.
- 3) Aid the BHA to complete their review of turnovers in BHA housing: The BHA has begun a review of the turnover of vacant units. The city should assist in both the review process and development of the resulting implementation plan.
- 4) Complete an inventory of the homelessness service infrastructure: A top to bottom review could reveal gaps and deficiencies that can be addressed immediately with minimal resources.
- 5) Coordinate with DHCD, neighboring jurisdictions, and agencies to more actively participate in the statewide family homelessness efforts: More than 50% of the state's homeless families claim to originate from Boston. These families are often sheltered out of the area. It is important to work with

other entities across the Commonwealth to have a strong presence in the statewide strategy development and implementation of shelter and placement policies for Boston families, with particular attention to family proximity to jobs, schools, and medical services.

## DREAM

- 1) Increase availability of supportive housing: Expand the production of homeless housing production beyond the historic production rate of 75 units per year. This will require strong leadership from the city to site developments despite opposition from some neighborhood residents.
- 2) Increase the availability of affordable housing for families: Families should not be forced to be homeless in order to gain access to affordable housing. The availability of affordable housing targeted to very-low income households should be increased. The homeless set-aside and priority should be reviewed and possibly expanded.
- 3) Provide pathways out of poverty: In conjunction with the state, we need to formalize case management and stabilization efforts and ensure quality control across homeless service agencies. The goal is to ensure that individualized plans and linkages to programs are created that help individuals and families address the educational, workforce development, and public health needs of those who have experienced homelessness. These programs help families and individuals break the cycle of poverty.
- 4) Increase linkages between homeless service

agencies and programs that support those most likely to become homeless: Expand connections to programs that address veterans' services, mental health issue, alcohol and drug recovery, domestic violence prevention, and other specific needs.

- 5) Improve relations between homeless service agencies and landlords/property owners in the private sector: It is crucial to acknowledge the important roles landlords can play in combatting the crisis of homelessness. The city should engage them in regular landlord education groups and landlord/tenant mediation programs to reduce evictions.

## **FOCUS 4: EXPAND FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

According to the Housing 2020 report, Boston will need to invest \$115 million of its own resources to produce the 5,000 affordable homes projected in that plan, assuming level federal funding. To build 6,000 or more units will require significantly more city resources, perhaps as much as \$200 million by 2020.

The Housing Working Group heard testimony about a number of different options for raising money and protecting tenants, from easier to implement changes such as an increase in linkage fees, to ideas where there is significant

disagreement, including real estate transfer taxes and rent stabilization. The Housing Working Group believes that the city's strong economic growth and high-capacity housing sector creates many opportunities to generate revenues and spend them more efficiently. The Housing Partnership Committee, working with the mayor and agency leaders, should determine precisely how much new revenue is necessary to achieve our goals and use an array of tools and programs to generate that revenue in a fair and sustainable manner.

## **KEEP**

- 1) Linkage program: The city should continue its highly effective linkage program and immediately institute inflation adjustments to catch up to increases of the past three years. It should institute regular inflation adjustments going forward.
- 2) Strong partnerships: The City of Boston has strong partnerships with a host of private, public, and quasi-public entities that support affordable housing development and preservation. The city should seek to leverage these relationships to increase the resources available for city projects and work collaboratively with them to find creative ways to lower costs and increase production.
- 3) City Line Item: For the past several years, the city has included a line item in the budget to support affordable housing. Mayor Walsh should increase that line item to \$15 million annually to provide a consistent source of flexible dollars for



housing programs.

- 4) Flexibility: City dollars are particularly valuable because they are flexible and can be deployed in accordance with city priorities and guidelines, rather than those established by the state or federal government. The city should take advantage of this flexibility to develop housing across a range of housing types, tenures, and development models.

## IMPLEMENT

- 1) Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP): The IDP policy has generated hundreds of affordable units and millions of dollars for housing, but it has been poorly implemented and monitored. The city of Boston should order a complete audit of the program to identify precisely how much money is available, whether additional funds should be collected, and to identify the complete stock of IDP units and their characteristics. Following this review, the city should consider a number of steps to strengthen the policy. The Housing Working Group supports the development of onsite units and believes that developers should have the ability to build offsite units or pay a fee that can support the development of an equivalent number of units elsewhere in the city. The Housing Working Group also agrees that this program should be implemented to promote mixed income buildings and neighborhoods, and retain economic diversity across the city. All IDP dollars should be administered by DND.

The Housing Working Group did not reach a consensus about other ideas that were proposed such as whether to increase the required percentage, adjust income targeting, or to adapt the policy to different neighborhood contexts. The Housing

Partnership Committee can help the city to determine these additional refinements and ensure complete transparency for all aspects of the program.

- 1) Improve Administration of Housing Programs: All funding for affordable housing should be channeled to the DND to ensure consistency, transparency, and accountability. The city should also make sure that dollars are being allocated across a variety of needs from new development to preservation, to homeownership education, to home improvement programs, and other uses. The goal is to ensure that the city's housing dollars are supporting a comprehensive approach to housing policy.
- 2) Advocate for state, federal and private resources: Mayor Walsh should use his bully pulpit and relationships to advocate forcefully for state and federal resources for affordable housing, including most immediately the recapitalization of the state Brownfields Redevelopment Fund. The current state Housing Development Incentive Program could be modified, for example, to be more encouraging of middle income rental development in Boston.
- 3) Inventory Public Land: Public land represents a public resource as valuable as dollars and should be deployed with equal diligence, strategy, and transparency. The city should complete an inventory of all public land and determine which parcels are best suited for permanent, affordable housing development. Such land should be made available at little to no cost for affordable, deed-restricted housing development.
- 4) Investigate new sources of housing funds:

DND should explore new funding sources that can be created or expanded, including city implementation of a bond-financing source for housing development, Tax Increment Financing (TIF), and other models from other cities.

## DREAM

- 1) Community Preservation Act: While there was not complete consensus on this point, a majority of the committee believes the city should enact the Community Preservation Act in 2014 in order to generate millions of dollars for affordable housing, historic preservation, and green space development. CPA would generate additional tax revenue—and significant state matching funds—to be used for a variety of housing and community improvement projects. Given the differences in opinion around the enactment of the CPA within the Housing Working Group and within the broader community, we believe that this is one area in which Mayor Walsh’s leadership and his ability to bridge people and communities will be extremely important.
- 2) Double city funding for affordable housing: Consistent with the need for a substantial increase in affordable housing development, the city should seek to double the amount of funding it provides to housing over the next five years. This requires a complete assessment of current funding levels and an exploration of potential new funding sources, including a potential bond financing program for housing development, Tax Increment Financing (TIF), and models from other cities.

## FOCUS 5: MAKE BOSTON A NATIONAL LEADER IN HEALTHY AND GREEN HOUSING

Boston is a national leader in affordable housing development, green energy technology, and health care. This gives us an opportunity to be a national leader in connecting these sectors in ways that dramatically improve the quality and health of our environment, our neighborhoods, and our housing options, while reducing health disparities and improving overall health among our residents. Recent and projected policy shifts related to climate change, energy, and health care are creating substantial opportunities to leverage the connections among these sectors.

## KEEP

- 1) Strong lead paint programs: Boston and the Commonwealth have long been national leaders in lead poisoning prevention and treatment. Boston should continue its aggressive approach to lead

paint abatement in our older housing stock.

- 2) **Renew Boston:** Renew Boston has helped to bring energy efficiency improvements to hundreds of Boston homeowners and tenants. The program should be continued, expanded, and improved to make it more customer friendly and easier to use.
- 3) **Retrofit existing affordable and private rental housing:** In recent years, the Boston Housing Authority and many owners of affordable housing units have begun to retrofit their buildings to make them more energy and water efficient, and to improve air quality. These efforts should continue and become commonplace, and should include the integration of solar and other renewable energy technologies. However, many private landlords, for-profit and nonprofit developers lack access to the funds and technical knowledge they need to undertake these “green retrofits.” The City of Boston should launch a targeted financing program, perhaps in conjunction with local banks, that will allow the city to share energy savings and, over time, generate a source of additional funding for housing. The city should also continue to help landlords with Housing Choice Voucher tenants to maintain and repair their apartments following regular inspections.

## IMPLEMENT

- 1) **Resident Services and Property Management:** The city should work with the BHA and private owners of affordable housing units to expand resident services and to ensure top-notch property maintenance. These efforts should include programs to educate tenants about the importance of

energy and water conservation, and the need to properly maintain their apartments.

- 2) **Address problem properties:** The city must maintain and expand efforts to address dilapidated properties that blight neighborhoods, reduce home values, and threaten public safety. The Committee heard a range of testimony on the effectiveness of the new Rental Housing Inspection Ordinance, with some people voicing strong support for the law and others expressing concern about its costs. That said, all agree that we need to make sure that our private rental housing stock is safe, clean, and healthy. The mayor should convene stakeholders to evaluate the ordinance and other strategies to ensure high quality rental housing throughout Boston’s neighborhoods. This will require a proactive code enforcement strategy led by a more efficient and responsive Inspectional Services Department (ISD). ISD should focus the bulk of its resources on the worst violations and the worst landlords by creating incentives/rewards for good owners, and increasingly stiff penalties for the worst. The city should also make more effective and aggressive use of the receivership law that allows the local government to fix up properties when owners refuse to do so.
- 3) **Promote partnerships between community health centers and housing developers/owners:** Many CDCs and community health centers have begun working together to provide health education and outreach services to residents. These programs should be encouraged and expanded.

## DREAM

- 1) Form New Partnership to Make Boston a National Leader: Mayor Walsh should convene the CEOs of the city's largest hospitals, insurance companies, and health care providers (such as community health centers) with those from the affordable housing and development sector and charge them with developing a strategy for making Boston the nation's leader in connecting housing and health. Research from Boston and elsewhere has shown that vast amounts of health care spending, and particularly health problems among the poor, can be prevented by improving the quality of housing and eliminating the causes of chronic asthma, lead poisoning, and the like. This suggests that a pilot effort to direct Medicaid funds towards housing quality improvements, for example, could save lives and taxpayer dollars. Such a strategy would take advantage of the new requirements under the Affordable Care Act for hospitals to invest in community needs, and the incentives in the ACA to address the social determinants of health disparities.
- 2) Health Impact Assessments: The city should promote the use of Health Impact Assessments to ensure that new housing developments will advance health and reduce health disparities.
- 3) Housing as anti-crime strategy: Violence is one of the most significant public health issues facing our neighborhoods. At the same time, there is growing evidence that strategic community and housing development can significantly reduce crime and violence in our neighborhoods. The Boston Police Department should work closely with DND, BRA, CDCs, and others to identify trouble spots where redevelopment could have a positive impact

on crime. This partnership should help developers design buildings and common spaces in such a way that keeps "eyes on the street" and reduces crime.

- 4) Net-zero housing: Work with developers and property owners to set and achieve a goal for increasing the number of homes that have a net energy use of zero by dramatically increase the use of solar and other renewable energy technologies to heat and power homes, and by encouraging deep energy retrofits.
- 5) Promote Eco-Innovation Districts: The Codman Square NDC has launched an eco-innovation district in its neighborhood with the goal of pursuing a comprehensive sustainability agenda in the area. This model should be replicated in other neighborhoods.

## Housing Working Group

### Co-chairs

- Vanessa Calderon-Rosado, CEO, Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción (IBA)
- Joe Kriesberg, CEO, Massachusetts Association of Development Corporations

### Members

- David Abromowitz, Partner/Director, Co-Chair of Real Estate Practice, Goulston & Storrs, PC
- Kathy Brown, Coordinator, Boston Tenant Coalition
- Tim Davis, Consultant and Senior Research Fellow, University of Massachusetts Boston
- Mark Fortune, Business Agent, Sprinkler Fitters Local 550



- Donna Haig Friedman, Director, Center for Social Policy, Research Associate Professor, McCormack Graduate School, UMass Boston
- Stephen Fulton, Rehousing Contractor, Department of Housing and Community Development
- Kevin Honan, State Representative, Chairman of Joint Committee on Housing
- Chris Jones, Executive Director, Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative
- Chrystal Kornegay, President and CEO, Urban Edge
- Gail Latimore, Executive Director, Codman Square Neighborhood Development Corporation
- Lydia Lowe, Executive Director, Chinese Progressive Association
- Maureen McDonagh, Director, Housing Law Clinic, Harvard Law School; Attorney and Lecturer on Law
- Andre Porter, Executive Director, Massachusetts Office of Small Business & Entrepreneurship
- Rev. Anne Rousseau, CFO, Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership
- Byron Rushing, State Representative
- Alejandra St. Guillen, Executive Director, Oíste
- John Tobin, Vice President of Community Affairs, Northeastern University
- Greg Vasil, CEO, Greater Boston Real Estate
- Bridgette Wallace, CEO and Co-founder, Wallace and Grant
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Photos: Kit Pyne





“What can Boston city government do—whether by itself or in partnership with others—to foster thorough human service efforts?”

## INTRODUCTION

The Human Services Department is committed to promoting the health and well-being of Boston residents and engaging residents where they are in their lives with particular regard to race, ethnicity, gender, creed, age, language, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, and station in life.

Services in every city department should be coordinated and administered in a culturally sensitive manner with an emphasis on inclusion and the goal of providing Bostonians with access to the tools and resources that support healthy, secure, and productive lives. The provision of social, recreation, health, and support services to city residents, particularly to the homeless, disabled, elderly, youth, women, immigrants, and veterans must be coordinated and made available in a customer

friendly and culturally competent manner. The Human Services Cabinet can only achieve these goals by coordinating its activities with every city department, community social service agencies, and outside advocates.

## THE PROCESS

The Human Services Working Group report advances policy goals and highlights the core values and priorities that emerged from issue papers prepared for the Martin J. Walsh mayoral campaign. The Human Services Working Group convened three meetings, an Open Town Hall, and a public hearing which was attended by almost 200 people interested in the delivery of human services across the city.

This report focuses on the mission of the City of Boston Human Services Department, identifies three key values, and details initiatives that support these values and presents recommendations for initiatives that the City of Boston should “Keep” as is, outlines new initiatives that the City of Boston can “Implement” with minimal resources, and describes new initiatives that represent long range goals or “Dreams.”

As Mayor Walsh has said repeatedly, poverty and inequality are at the root of the majority of problems in society at large, and Boston in particular. Poverty can be defined as an individual’s or group’s lack of the essential tangible and intangible assets required to survive, to thrive, and to live with dignity. Poverty has many causes and manifests itself in many ways. Lack of essential assets such as wealth, working skills, shelter, food, physical and mental health,

self-respect, and awareness causes precariousness, vulnerability, insecurity, fear, distress, illness, despair, and physical and emotional suffering. These in turn foster violence, isolation, anger, aggression, resentment, and hate. Poverty is the root of human insecurity.

Mayor Walsh asked the Human Services Working Group, “What can Boston city government do—whether by itself or in partnership with others—to foster thorough human service efforts?”

Through our Working Group and community discussions, we have identified what we consider to be three crucial principles, or core values, linking Mayor Walsh’s policies in the areas of poverty and human services.

These principles are:

- Access
- Cultural Competence
- Human Security

These core values structure our recommendations. We agree with Mayor Walsh that “programs and services aimed at eradicating poverty must be integrated into a larger and more comprehensive strategy to more efficiently reduce poverty and give households the opportunity to move sequentially from poverty to stability and on toward wealth building.” We believe that the approach will require a culture change at City Hall and possibly, over time, a reformulation and restructuring of the Department of Human Services. We understand that most of the following recommendations would involve hiring new additional staff and training or retraining present staff.

Underlying this report is the belief that the





provision of social, recreation, health, and support services to all city residents, including the homeless, disabled, elderly, youth, women, immigrants, and veterans should and must be coordinated and made available in a customer friendly and culturally sensitive manner. We understand that the provision of services does not solve poverty. However, without effective services, the path to human security can be insurmountable.

## THE RECOMMENDATIONS

### FOCUS 1: ACCESS

Ensure that quality city services, employment, public health, and education are accessible to all of Boston's residents.

#### KEEP

- 1) Continued support for Summer Jobs for Youth.
- 2) Neighborhood Response Teams.
- 3) The ONEin3 Program.

#### IMPLEMENT

- 1) Assessment
  - a) Conduct a thorough review of all City Hall human services programs. Use outside evaluators (these can be volunteers). Assess the quality of each of the departments/ services offered.
  - b) Audit the quality and quantity of services available in each neighborhood; some areas need catch-up attention or an entirely different needs assessments and action strategy.
  - c) Assess accessibility needs for disabled residents across services in the city.
  - d) Decrease the level of red tape necessary

for small neighborhood businesses to get permitting, licenses, and access to capital.

- e) Establish and implement protocols for building partnerships between disadvantaged businesses and public and private opportunities.

## 2) Improve Communication

- a) Create a position of communications director in the Human Service Cabinet.
- b) Broaden communication about current affairs of the city to include all ethnic media.
- c) Re-create Little City Halls.
- d) Create benchmark for shifting the present “customer service” culture of City Hall to a culture of “we can do.” This may entail the hiring of an ombudsperson(s) or navigator(s) in City Hall.
- e) Create a position of a well-informed greeter at the entrance to City Hall.
- f) Create a significant women’s veterans presence in the Boston Veterans’ Department.
- g) Establish a Boston LGBTQ Commission.
- h) Expand programming at BCYF for 14-17 year olds.

## DREAM

- 1) Establish collaboration and the integration of services through the development of a more

grounded, neighborhood-based presence in every city neighborhood.

- 2) Use the Little City Halls to audit, develop, and integrate services for the residents at the local neighborhood level. Pay special attention to homeless, disabled, elderly, and young people, immigrants, veterans, and women.
- 3) Create a service plan for each resident of public housing, integrating the delivery of services with local human services at the neighborhood level.
- 4) Expand Youth Jobs Program from a summer program to a year round program.
- 5) Rethink and significantly expand ESL and GED Programs.
- 6) Create a citywide network of mental health and substance abuse providers.
- 7) Create a citywide network of senior centers.

## FOCUS 2: CULTURAL COMPETENCE

Several demographic phenomena have changed the population of our city. Increases in immigration altered the cultural background of the population and increased cultural diversity.

As we celebrate our diversity and aim to address the effects of poverty, we need to understand these changes have caught the established service



system unprepared to address a rapidly evolving population that is increasingly multi-lingual and multi-cultural, and/or whose economic situation creates increasing isolation. This manifests itself in several ways. With few exceptions, established services have not yet developed the cultural and linguistic capacity to serve new populations. Culture and language often become “barriers” to services for new linguistic and cultural groups. Cultural differences also affect the delivery of services to native, English speaking populations receiving services from newcomers working in the human services, something particularly salient in support services for the elderly. Finally, the lack of understanding of how “differences” affect the delivery of services, from identification of a

problem to the appropriateness of interventions, results in services that are often ineffective (and increasingly inefficient as well).

The Human Services Group focused on ways to make city services more culturally competent. This entails training that will build the capacity of City Hall in particular and human service organizations and staff in general to become more effective in dealing with cultures and experiences other than their own. This training will enable service workers (1) to understand the ways that differences in culture and experience affect the delivery of services (2) to know the characteristics of the clients receiving the services and (3) to develop strategies to adapt current services to the needs of vulnerable populations. For human services (or city services) to become culturally competent, there needs to be strong commitment from the leadership to the line worker in order to change the manner in which services are delivered.

## KEEP

- 1) Keep the Office of New Bostonians.
- 2) Emulate the medical model of cultural competency implemented at Boston Medical Center.

## IMPLEMENT

- 1) Create a position of diversity officer. Each city department would set concrete benchmarks in collaboration with the diversity office. These benchmarks would be especially targeted to providing quality service to members of under-represented communities. It is important to include the Civil Rights Commission in this process.

- 2) Support and expand the current Office of New Bostonians to increase access to City Hall services. The office will help ensure that immigrants have full opportunity to community programs ranging from home foreclosure prevention, youth development, ESL, after-school programs, and other essential supportive services throughout Boston.
- 3) Direct the ONB to lead the process for the City for Boston to become a “Welcoming City.”
- 4) Support a safe driving bill for immigrants.
- 5) Inventory community-based programs and publicize that information in culturally and linguistically effective ways.

## DREAM

- 1) Ensure that immigrants and all residents of Boston obtain equal access to resources and support for full participation in the economic vitality of the city.

Photo: Department of Neighborhood Development



- 2) Create an anti-bullying campaign for Bostonians of all ages, including the elderly.
- 3) Work collaboratively with other city agencies to bring together immigrant business leaders, community leaders, students, and local residents to develop a collaborative agenda with specific benchmarks in public health, business, development, housing, education, and social services.
- 4) Create culturally competent substance abuse and mental health services in the city.

## FOCUS 3: HUMAN SECURITY

Poverty is not simply a matter of lack of services. The lack of a job, or skills, cannot be remedied by any particular service. To avoid the current compartmentalization, and its consequences (confusion, gaps, redundancies, and problems of access) we recommend that the city’s division of Human Services be re-structured around the (global) concept of human security.

A solid pathway out of poverty must be built on secure terrain. A comprehensive approach to human security will serve to empower Boston’s most vulnerable residents: women, elders, youth, communities of color, veterans, and immigrants. Such a comprehensive approach should include food security, shelter security, economic security,





personal security and health (physical and mental) security.

## KEEP

- 1) Keep the Domestic Violence Program at BPD, and integrate it more directly with the work of other human services departments.
- 2) Keep and revisit the City of Boston's current employment initiative for residents with Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI).

## IMPLEMENT

- 1) Create an environment where schools, police, fire, and human services officials meet together regularly to create and implement policy. Use comprehensive wrap-around initiatives in which all of these groups will operate and

participate.

- 2) Focus on building stable families by providing assistance to the grandparents raising grandchildren in Boston who are the primary guardians for the children in their care. This would include training for Boston Public School staff and all city departments regarding access and communication with kin who are not the children's biological parents.
- 3) Create a training program for all mandated reporters in city government to address the issue of elder abuse.
- 4) Expand veteran's services representatives' training to include working with vets on job placement, PTSD, women veteran's issues, and homelessness.
- 5) Create a Re-entry Prisoner Program for Boston residents (E.g., Fedcap).
- 6) Conduct an in-depth audit of all proposals and existing contracts to vendors that deliver human services and support the economic self-sufficiency of poor residents.
- 7) Create a citywide network of mental health and substance abuse providers.

## DREAM

- 1) Create a viable community response to neighborhood trauma/terrorism creating a city in which each life has the same value.
- 2) Assess the advantage of establishing neighborhood response teams for all neighborhoods.

- 3) Develop a strong position on CORI reform, especially as it relates to veterans and offenders now living in the community.

## Human Services Working Group

### Co-chairs

- Sandra Albright, Former Executive Director, Kit Clark Senior Services
- Marie St. Fleur, Former State Representative

### Members

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- Felix Arroyo, Chief of Health and Human Services, City of Boston
- Vernell Baker, Veterans Advocate
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- Catherine D'Amato, President and CEO, The Greater Boston Food Bank
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- Samuel Hurtado, Executive Director, South Boston En Acción
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- Alyce Lee, Trustee of University of Massachusetts
- Giles Li, Executive Director, Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center, Inc.
- Sister Margaret Leonard, Executive Director, Project Hope
- Liz Malia, State Representative
- Josiane Martinez, Cross-Cultural Marketing Professional and Community Organizer

- Larry Mayes, VP for Programs, Catholic Charities
- Michelle McGee, Partner, Kearney, Donovan, & McGee
- Dale Mitchell, Executive Director, Ethos; Chair, LGBT Aging Project
- Louis Oswald Neptune, Program Director, Haitian Adult Day Health Center
- Angelo Scaccia, State Representative
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- Maicharia Weir Lytle, Executive Director, LIFT-Boston
- Joyce Williams, Former Commissioner, City of Boston's Commission on Affairs of the Elderly

### Staff Support

- Rory Cuddy, South Boston resident

Organizational titles and affiliations are provided for identification purposes only.

★ MAYOR ★  
**MARTIN J. WALSH**

**BOSTON**2014  
TRANSITION COMMITTEE

## Intergovernmental Relations

Working Group  
Transition Team Report

April 16, 2014



Photos: Kit Pyne





## MISSION

As with the other Working Groups, our goal is to aid Boston Mayor Martin J. Walsh by drawing up a menu of ideas and proposals that represent possible ways to advance certain values or priorities laid out during his recent mayoral campaign. Unlike other Working Groups for the Transition Team, our work did not include a public hearing nor wide publication of ideas or input. It is the very nature of the work of intergovernmental relations that our focus is on the mechanics of communication to further public policy. As such, this work, while vital, is little understood by the general public. However, as Mayor Walsh knows from his experience as a state legislator, intergovernmental relations provides an essential service in the furtherance of government cooperation on a local, regional, federal, and international level.



While many of the other Working Groups organized their thinking around the scenarios Keep, Implement, and Dream, the discussion among our team more appropriately focused on relationships, and could be more accurately organized around Build, Deepen, and Develop.

In this report we will discuss Mayor Walsh's opportunities to build and deepen relationships between the city and other elected and appointed officials. To do so, he will be able to take advantage of the relationships he has developed over the course of his career in public life, the existing infrastructure and personnel within City Hall, and new partnerships at all levels of government.

For this analysis to be of use to the administration, we must consider the initial strengths and weaknesses of both Mayor Walsh and the City of Boston at this point in time. We will then discuss how best to address them with regard to engagement at the city, state, federal, and international level.

## STRENGTHS

To identify the strengths of Mayor Walsh and his administration in the area of intergovernmental relations, it is important to consider competitive advantages, core competencies, and the best opportunities to maximize impact.

It is without debate that the mayor and his office's greatest strengths are in the mayor's goodwill, his strong legislative connections, and his existing intergovernmental relationships. While Mayor Menino also had strong relationships, there is now an opportunity to reset those relationships in a more collaborative manner, particularly as

regards fellow mayors in the Commonwealth. Mayor Walsh should "seize the moment," build upon those relationships, and use them to support, collaborate, and coordinate with the regional coalition of mayors' offices.

An additional strength is the current staff and institutional knowledge of the city's Department of Intergovernmental Relations. The current charge of the mayor's Intergovernmental Relations Department is to coordinate the city's dealings with the federal, state, and other local governments and to foster constructive links between the city and these entities. The department keeps the mayor informed about intergovernmental issues and assists him in representing the city's interests in these matters. In addition, the office serves as a liaison between the administration and the Boston City Council.

Another important strength is Boston's brand. Boston maintains global brand awareness in substantial part thanks to the myriad higher educational institutions within the city and its immediate neighbors. Current and emerging world leaders travel to the metropolitan area to further their respective careers, with many researchers, businesspeople, and creative economy practitioners remaining for both long and short terms. The city's brand is the first connection point with potential investors and residents; incentives and other economic inducements only enter the conversation after the initial brand interaction.

## WEAKNESSES

To identify the weaknesses and Mayor Walsh and his administration, we must consider where the city can improve operationally and reputational,



and what areas have been hindered by past practices, relationships, or perceptions.

Boston is Massachusetts' capital city, its major media market, and has a population that doubles every working day. While according to every other metric relating to the health of the city this is a major asset, in terms of intergovernmental relationships this can be a liability. Boston is perceived by many in the legislature as commanding a disproportionate amount of state resources. Boston has the staff and resources that other cities and towns in the Commonwealth lack and uses them to engage at all levels of

government. It may be true that Boston does not need its neighbors to help effectuate change in the legislature, in Washington, or internationally, but Boston should work with its neighbors on both big and small issues.

Finally, during the campaign and in the early days of the administration, much has been said about Mayor Walsh's positive relationships with local, state, and national leaders. While this is a tremendous asset, it could also raise unrealistic expectations around issues such as local aid from the state or federal transportation earmarks.

## MUNICIPAL PARTNERSHIPS

Boston's engagement in organizations like the Metro Mayor's Group should be stronger. Stepping up Mayor Walsh's commitment to this group and in other organizations will help create a path for Boston to achieve its regionalization goals in the areas of Economic Development, Tourism, and International Relations.

A thoughtful relationship with these other communities—our local regional partners—will help us work towards strength and progress as a region, through both a national and international lens. In the end, our regional strength nationally and internationally lies in our strength locally.

Mayor Walsh should make it a priority to establish personal relationships with other local mayors, especially within Route 128. These relationships are critical. Routine communication between Mayor Walsh and his staff with the regional mayors and their staffs is essential.

## STATE RELATIONS

Mayor Walsh's experience in the legislature, the deep relationships he has with his former colleagues, and the affection and respect in which he is held is a key asset of his new administration. As noted previously, it can also set unreasonable expectations. In FY14, an estimated 16% of Boston's revenue will come through state aid. The two largest state appropriations to the city are \$209 million in education aid (Chapter 70 funds) and \$164 million in Unrestricted General Government Aid (UGGA). Other priority line items in the state budget include charter school reimbursement, summer jobs, public safety/violence prevention grants, special education circuit breaker, homelessness assistance, Boston Public Library funds, job training, public housing, and more. The expectation is that Mayor Walsh can convince the legislature to increase that funding.

There was been a longstanding misconception that Boston receives a disproportionate amount of state aid, which consistent educational efforts have been unable to dispel. In fact, Boston receives less state aid than it deserves in terms of population per capita or revenue generation. Boston generates 20% of all state tax revenue and receives 1% back in state aid. The 5% of local aid provided to Boston does not correspond to the 10% of the Commonwealth's population living in the city. This is a longstanding and thorny issue, and one that jeopardizes relationships with other cities and towns. Mayor Walsh could use his strong relationships on Beacon Hill to begin a real discussion of funding equity, which would benefit the people of Boston.

In addition, there is the general issue of home rule. In comparison to similar cities in other states, Massachusetts imposes more legal

obstacles to levy taxes, regulate elections, control transportation, or the granting of liquor licenses on the city of Boston. There has been some progress on this issue with regard to local option taxes, as well as progress in the area of liquor licenses. The mayor should continue to partner with the City Council on this particular issue, and continue to educate his former colleagues in the legislature on the larger concept.

## FEDERAL RELATIONS

Boston has been engaged with Washington on many different levels, through the Massachusetts congressional delegation, external organizations such as the U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM), National League of Cities (NLC), the National Low Income Housing Coalition, the Northeast-Midwest Institute and others, and directly with the White House. The importance of federal funding to the city, through direct funding and competitive grants, is extremely important and not fully realized.

The direct work in Washington and with national organizations is coordinated by IGR staff and a contract lobbyist in Washington. Several members of the transition team cited the good work of this team in efforts around federal funding and issues, notably the Mayors Against Illegal Guns (MAIG) Coalition with former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg. High-profile efforts like MAIG and leadership roles in USCM and NLC can help Mayor Walsh build political capital to benefit Boston's standing for federal aid, trade, and provide a platform for bringing new ideas into the city.

The base of federal relations work is to define key issues and priorities of city departments and



articulate them to the Congressional delegation and relevant federal agencies. As previously stated, the mayor has strong relationship with the Congressional delegation, but that must be deepened and extend to relationships with key delegation and City Hall staff. Boston's pursuit of competitive grants from federal agencies in the areas of education, public safety, transportation, community development, public health, broadband, homelessness, seniors, energy efficiency and conservation, workforce development, and public housing is extremely important. It also presents another opportunity for regional collaboration, as Boston has the resources to be a leader in joint efforts that can maximize opportunities for the region. The mayor

should also work to coordinate advocacy efforts with other major cities and key organizations for federal programs and initiatives important to municipal stakeholders.

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Boston's global brand, which we listed as a strength, includes its surrounding cities and towns and in some cases conflates to the entire Commonwealth or, more broadly, New England. That the "image" of Boston seeps across jurisdictional boundaries does not in itself pose a problem—indeed, the daily interplay between Boston and commuters, Boston businesses and business along Route 128, and Boston Logan International Airport serving New England only further serves to solidify that brand among global leaders.

The "metropolitan brand" fits well with the mayor's intention to work more deeply with surrounding municipalities on economic development and other relevant issues. Below are some points of shared, interrelated strengths within the metropolis:

- 1) Numerous higher educational institutions, from community colleges to post-graduate degree granting schools.
- 2) Highly trained workforce, in the innovation economy and the trades.
- 3) Developed mass transportation network, with a commuter rail reaching far beyond city limits, covering a broader swath of the aforesaid workforce.
- 4) Diverse cultural and leisure offerings, from the Boston Symphony Orchestra to the hiking



trails of the Blue Hills.

Deeper regional coordination will only serve to further leverage these assets. In addition, a global company entering a neighboring municipality can have significant effects on Boston, where services and other economic activity may be sourced. A foreign investor, presented with the breadth and depth of a regional pool, would have a much broader understanding of the market as a whole as opposed to being presented with each municipality's selling points.

One point of entry into this discussion is the Consular Corps of Boston, a grouping of both official and honorary representatives of foreign governments. This group makes up the diplomatic corps of the city and region, but is also an important conduit for investment. Currently there are 56 countries represented in the region, with 60% of these siting their offices or addresses in the City of Boston. In addition to diplomatic activities, many of the larger consulates maintain economic departments with the specific aim of connecting to the innovation economy in the region. These departments connect regularly with local economic development partners and would be well served by a regional access point.

While the 56 consulates in the region represent a significant portion of the global economy, Russia, India and China do not have consular representation in the region. All cover the area from New York. Any discussion on attracting those countries (and others that are not represented) would require not only a conversation with the foreign government but with partners at the state and federal level, an

opportunity for additional intergovernmental cooperation.

Boston and its environs host a significant number of international students every year. According to the Institute of International Education, Massachusetts hosted over 46,000 international students in 2013, ranking 4th in the nation. Expenditure attributed to these students and activities was estimated at over \$1.7 billion dollars in 2013. The top two institutions in the Commonwealth for international students in 2013 were both located in Boston, Northeastern University and Boston University, with 7,705 and 6,615 students, respectively. (The 3rd and 4th institutions in terms of international student population, Harvard and MIT, are both located within the immediate metropolitan area).

Acknowledging the above, Boston has an opportunity to increase the number international students through dedicated outreach (in partnership with the Commonwealth, which has already begun engagement on such efforts), and through events and programs designed to further welcome these students. These efforts would complement efforts to retain students once they have graduated, which would involve further collaboration, particularly on the federal level.

This topic begs the question of where responsibility for this important initiative lies within the administration. In the past, international issues resided within the economic development arm of the Boston Redevelopment Authority. Since the last discussion of the Intergovernmental Relations Working Group, Mayor Walsh has created a Chief of Economic Development position, and having staff within his cabinet with experience in this field could prove valuable.

## THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Intergovernmental Relations Department has not been the only link between the mayor and those entities and it is not our recommendation that it serve that function. However, the IGR Department should continue to play both a lead and coordinating role. The staff of the IGR Department can only be effective if they speak for the mayor, and it is important that they continue to have direct access to him. As Mayor Walsh has close relations with many elected officials, particularly in the state legislature, they must play a key role in coordinating his contacts and prioritizing his agenda.

As a Working Group, we did not discuss the Mayor's relationship with the Boston City Council at any significant length. This is a close relationship whose members must collaborate on the budget, approving federal and other grant appropriations, the enactment of ordinances, and the delivery of constituent services. As a candidate for mayor, Marty Walsh stated his desire to have a more collegial working relationship with the Boston City Council. The mayor's close relationships with individual councilors, as well as members of his administration who have served on the council, will help him maintain and deepen his work with the council. He cannot allow local council issues to be overshadowed by issues at the state and federal level.

As stated before, one of the great strengths of the administration will be Mayor Walsh's existing relationships with elected and appointed officials. Deepening those relationships, building new relationships with municipal officials, and assembling (and retaining) a talented team to help coordinate and prioritize

the administration's agenda at all levels of government should be a top priority.

The members of this Working Group are confident in Mayor Walsh's ability achieve this goal, and stand ready to offer him our advice and support.

## Intergovernmental Relations Working Group

### Co-chairs

- Rosemary Powers, Deputy Chief of Staff for Government Affairs, Governor Deval Patrick
- Keith Mahoney, Director of Public Affairs, The Boston Foundation

### Members

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- Joe Curtatone, Mayor, City of Somerville
- Michael Donovan, Clerk of Civil Business, Suffolk Superior Court
- Maureen Feeney, Clerk, City of Boston, Former City Council President
- Tom Gradel, Massachusetts Office of Trade and Tourism
- Maura Hennigan, Clerk of Criminal Business, Suffolk Superior Court
- Kathleen Joyce, Boston Bar Association
- Thomas Koch, Mayor, City of Quincy
- Roger Lau, Office of Senator Elizabeth Warren
- Chris Philbin, UMass Medical
- Therese Murray, President, Massachusetts Senate
- Joseph Sullivan, Mayor, Town of Braintree
- Setti Warren, Mayor, City of Newton
- Bob Fowkes, Office of Congressman Steven Lynch

- Mark Gallagher, Office of Senator Edward Markey
- Robert DeLeo, Speaker, Massachusetts House of Representatives
- William “Mo” Cowan, Mintz Levin, Former United States Senator
- Marjorie Decker, Massachusetts House of Representatives
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Organizational titles and affiliations are provided for identification purposes only.



Public Health  
Working Group  
Transition Team Report  
April 16, 2014







“What can Boston city government do—whether by itself or in partnership with others—to make Boston a national leader in eliminating health disparities?”

## INTRODUCTION

### “ONE” HEALTHY BOSTON

We are proud that Boston consistently ranks among the healthiest cities in the country<sup>1</sup> according to national surveys. But when we look deeper at who is healthy and who is not in Boston, we see stark inequities based on a number of social conditions, particularly race and ethnicity, income, education, neighborhood, and lack of English language skills.

<sup>1</sup> See, for example: Boston Named Healthiest City in America, Huffington Post, 2014. Available at: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/divya-raghavan/healthiest-city-in-america\\_b\\_4647914.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/divya-raghavan/healthiest-city-in-america_b_4647914.html); America's Top 20 Healthiest Cities: Boston #3, Forbes Magazine 2011. Available at: <http://www.forbes.com/pictures/eigl45hfh/3-boston-mass/>; Gokhale, M. The Five Healthiest Cities in America, AARP, March 6, 2012. Available at: <http://www.aarp.org/travel/destinations/info-03-2012/5-healthiest-american-cities.2.html>.

Mayor Martin J. Walsh asked the Public Health Working Group, “What can Boston city government do—whether by itself or in partnership with others—to make Boston a national leader in eliminating health disparities?”

## THE PROCESS

To address this question, the Public Health Working Group:

- 1) Reviewed data about health disparities and inequities among Boston neighborhoods.
- 2) Learned about existing programs of the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) and others.
- 3) Listened to comments and recommendations from many neighborhood and organization leaders and citizens at two public hearings.
- 4) Developed the consensus recommendations in this report through discussions at our meetings.

We were also guided by policy proposals made in the campaign, which included:

- 1) Creating partnerships among city and private organizations to promote health.
- 2) Developing greater transparency and accountability in health services and planning.
- 3) Building a grassroots health initiative and infrastructure to connect every Boston resident to health and social services he or she needs.

Since Paul Revere served as Boston’s first Health Commissioner, protecting and improving the

public’s health has been a core function of city government. Therefore, the Working Group recommends Mayor Walsh continue the city’s commitment to identify and reduce health disparities, which disproportionately affect racial and ethnic communities, people with lower incomes, and residents of certain neighborhoods.

On average, Bostonians who are African American or Latino, have lower income and education levels, and/or live in certain neighborhoods have shorter and sicker lives than those who are white, have higher incomes, and/or live in other neighborhoods. Just a few of many examples from our recent data make this point:

- 1) Based on a comparison of life expectancy, white Bostonians live, on average, two years more than African American Bostonians.
- 2) African American residents visited hospital emergency departments for asthma at greater than six times the rate of white residents.
- 3) African American residents of Boston were more than 29 times as likely to be murdered than white residents; Latinos were more than 12 times as likely; African American babies were 54 percent more likely to die as an infant than white babies.
- 4) African American women in Boston were twice as likely to die from cervical cancer as white women.
- 5) African American men in Boston were almost four times as likely to die from prostate cancer as white men. Latino men were close to three times as likely to die from prostate cancer as whites.



were neighborhoods that experienced the highest rates of substance abuse deaths and suicide.

Health begins at home. Social, economic, and environmental factors are more important as contributors to the public's health than access to medical care alone. Access to quality affordable medical care is, of course, important. Boston has many of the best hospitals and community health centers in the country, and these make an enormous contribution to the physical and mental health of our residents. Thanks to both the Massachusetts and national health insurance reforms, 96% of adults and virtually all children in Boston have health insurance. In spite of this great success, certain populations remain outside of the system.

The Working Group recognizes the importance of the health care industry in the city of Boston both as providers of medical care and as driving forces in the city's job market and economy. This sector includes hospitals, community health centers, research and training organizations, and pharmaceutical, device, software, and consulting firms. The industry must be mobilized to play a larger role in reducing health disparities.

Similarly, we recognize that public health is affected in various ways by the actions of many city departments. Boston itself, as a major employer and participant in economic development, can advance policies to address public health. The Working Group also recognizes that state government plays a significant role in financing and regulating health services. Our recommendations to reduce disparities and improve public health will require new action and involvement by all these institutions and by all of Boston's residents.

- 6) Roxbury and North Dorchester, the neighborhoods with the lowest socioeconomic status, also were among those neighborhoods that experienced the highest rates of chronic disease, hospitalization, and poor birth outcomes.

At the same time:

- 1) White Boston residents were twice as likely as African American residents to die from an unintentional drug overdose.
- 2) South Boston, the South End, and the Fenway

Improved data collection and transparency, as well as higher levels of cross-institutional collaboration, will be central to the success of any of our recommendations. We know from our own experiences and from public testimony that collaboration in data collection and sharing does not come naturally to many public and private organizations. Therefore, it will be important to develop skills in collaboration and the use of relevant data for decision-making throughout city departments and in our neighborhoods.

## THE RECOMMENDATIONS

Our recommendations to the mayor and his administration include focusing immediate attention on the two most glaring and dangerous threats to public health and the safety of Boston residents: addiction and violence. Simultaneously, we recommend building a public and private health planning infrastructure that can develop a long-term strategies to eliminate health disparities and embed the skills and commitment to use city policies and programs to eliminate health inequities in every city department.

### FOCUS 1: ADDICTION TREATMENT AND RECOVERY

If there were enough treatment and recovery services to meet the needs of Boston residents, Mayor Walsh and many others would not receive desperate calls for help in getting someone into treatment every day.

Addiction and recovery services are among the largest unmet health service needs in the city. Individuals with untreated addictions live shorter, sicker lives and incur higher medical costs. They may drive drug-related crime. They suffer and cause family and neighborhood stress and violence. Mayor Walsh's personal story is a testament to the potential for successful recovery. The city cannot achieve its objective to eliminate health disparities without closing the addiction and recovery gap.

We must act now to get people into treatment and recovery. At the same time, we must research, design and implement a longer-term plan that enables people with addictions to get effective treatment the same way they get other needed services.

Students in Boston use drugs and alcohol at slightly lower rates than their peers elsewhere in the state. However, students who develop early alcohol and drug problems, often associated with being exposed to violence and trauma early in life, face huge barriers to getting effective care.

Nobody really knows the size and mix of evidence-based treatment and recovery resources we would need if everyone with the disease were properly screened and referred for treatment. Similarly, we do not know how many fewer prison cells we would need if an addicted person's first encounter with the criminal justice system led to treatment and support services. We do know that every day, individuals and parents desperately scramble for a detox or treatment slot while in some programs there are at least a few empty beds and unused capacity. In the short term, we must make better use of the city's current resources while we identify and create what we need with our partners.





During the campaign and since he took office, Mayor Walsh reiterated his commitment to make effective recovery services available to every Bostonian who needs them. Our recommendations are designed to help him achieve this goal through immediate and longer-term actions.

## KEEP

- 1) BPHC-sponsored treatment programs, like the BPHC Women's Residential program, methadone, and office-based opiate treatment, and Long Island residential job training and social enterprise programs like Serving

Ourselves should be kept and expanded.

- 2) The city should continue expanding access to Narcan, a safe and easily administered medicine that can reverse a potentially fatal opioid overdose. Boston has led the way in reversing overdoses by increasing access to Narcan for both emergency responders and family members of addicted people. Since 2007, Boston has saved over 2,000 individuals from lethal overdose through a combination of street outreach, training of first responders, and providing access to individuals who are at highest risk of an overdose. Boston EMS workers have successfully carried Narcan for years. Boston police have received training, but do not currently carry Narcan; Boston firefighters would need to receive training before carrying it. Boston also should consider models like the one adopted in Rhode Island, where pharmacists can prescribe Narcan to individuals who are seeking access to the medication and increase the availability of Narcan to vulnerable populations such as residents in sober houses and treatment programs.
- 3) BPHC and other community-based partners should keep and expand their efforts to make sure that every resident of the city is enrolled in an appropriate health insurance program, with special and continual effort to get and retain coverage for homeless, addicted and mentally ill individuals. Some addiction treatment providers report that up to 20% of their Boston resident clients do not have health insurance despite the fact that 96% of all Massachusetts residents now have public or private health insurance.

## IMPLEMENT

- 1) Create an Office of Addiction and Recovery Services with a mandate, authority, and resources to develop and implement a plan that will permanently close the gap between the need and supply of effective treatment and recovery services in cooperation with public and private partners.
- 2) The city should use its power as a major purchaser of health insurance for its employees and dependents to insist that insurers implement payment rates, provider contracting standards, and other changes that significantly expand access to effective treatment and recovery services for its employees and their dependents. In particular, the city should demand that insurance company payment rates, medical necessity, and prior approval procedures be revised to provide prompt access to treatment. The city should take a leadership position with other major employers, both public and private, to enlist their support for these changes.
- 3) Boston should work with state partners and

providers to increase Medicaid add-ons for disproportionate share hospitals that provide behavioral health services and addiction treatment. Community health centers, hospitals, and other responsible providers must be incentivized to develop integrated addiction, medical, and mental health services.

- 4) As a step toward achieving full integration of addiction and physical medical services, community health centers and treatment providers should collaborate to provide regular screening, brief intervention, and referral programs. These services should be scheduled to ensure that appropriate screening and referrals are available regularly throughout the city. For example, the PAATHS program could be expanded to neighborhood locations for screening and referral. Special attention should be paid to older health center patients whose drinking or inappropriate use of medications may be harming their health but who have never been screened or offered assistance; individuals with addictions that do not require detox before treatment; and adolescents who are beginning to get in trouble with alcohol, prescription medications, marijuana, or other drugs.

- 5) The city should work with its human resources department, unions, and local businesses to create job training and opportunities for individuals who are completing treatment or returning to the community after incarceration.

- 6) Working with state partners, the city should support licensing and appropriate safety regulations for “sober homes.” Sober homes, also known as alcohol- and drug- free housing, are private residences owned and operated by



Photo: Kit Pyne



individual landlords to provide affordable, substance-free housing for individuals in recovery. Many provide lifesaving support to their residents and are constructive neighbors. Others are not as successful. Currently, there is no regulation of these facilities by the state Department of Public Health. As a result, the quality of programs can vary significantly and there is no way to identify or report concerns about the quality of such housing. This is cause for concern among community members, treatment providers, and public officials. We believe licensing, with appropriate and enforceable standards, is in the interests of the residents of the facilities and the neighborhoods that host them.

- 7) The city should urge all schools to have age-appropriate, skills-based substance use prevention and health education curricula. This can be done in partnership with community providers to foster relationships between students, parents, educators, and local service providers.

## DREAM

- 1) We envision a time—not too far in the future—when the prevalence of addiction is reduced because the socio-economic and

environmental disparities associated with the disease have been eliminated, and there are effective prevention programs for families, schools and neighborhoods. Treatment for individuals who develop an addiction will be available without stigma or barriers. Medical insurance will cover the treatment and recovery support individuals need in a way that is fully integrated with their medical and mental health care. A community health worker stationed at a community health center near their home or a case manager associated with their treatment provider would have responsibility for assisting them and making sure they were not alone or unable to navigate the system. As part of a larger initiative to better integrate health care and public health, community health workers could be paid from a small portion of the global payments made to health providers by insurers to reimburse the services they provide. This would reduce readmissions and the need or overuse expensive medical services.

- 2) We envision a time—also not too far in the future—when there will be significantly fewer people in jail or prison for alcohol or drug-related offenses. We also envision a time where those who are in jail for alcohol and drug offenses will receive intensive treatment, recovery support, and training while incarcerated, and return to their communities with connections to the services and support they need for successful reintegration.

## FOCUS 2: REDUCE VIOLENCE AND ASSOCIATED TRAUMA

There are too many guns in the

city and many of them are in the wrong hands. Guns, violence, and the associated trauma and stress they create in neighborhoods and families are a major public health threat. They are also a jarring example of racial and ethnic health and safety disparities in the city. Mayor Walsh has already brought key stakeholders together to discuss issues surrounding violence and trauma, demonstrating how important this issue is to him and to his administration.

Violence, in all of its forms, is caused by a set of learned behaviors that are significantly impacted by the social conditions in which people live. Research shows that early exposure to violence, as a victim or as a repeated witness, is a direct contributor to future violent behavior, addiction, and other poor life outcomes. A comprehensive strategy to reduce violence must engage every resident and every institution that can positively affect individuals, families, communities, and the physical and social environment. While public and private partners are working to achieve this goal, the city needs leadership to forge collaboration and develop effective violence prevention strategies. .

We heard from many groups that are actively engaged in preventing violence. These conversations left us with the impression that the

city does not have a strategy that unifies public and private efforts. We need a more coherent and effective strategy of violence prevention and support for traumatized victims.

## KEEP

- 1) The Violence Intervention and Advocacy Coalition.
- 2) Boston's leadership in the Mayor's Task Force Against Illegal Guns.
- 3) Existing violence/trauma intervention programs, including the BPHC's violence, prevention, intervention, and victim support programs should be kept and expanded in collaboration with neighborhood based organizations.

## IMPLEMENT

- 1) We recommend that the mayor designate a senior official with a mandate and resources



Photo: Kit Pyne





to convene meetings of public and private agencies that play a role in preventing violence. These groups should work together to develop, implement, and be held mutually accountable for a violence prevention strategy. The strategy should include neighborhood and block level data to identify and intervene in situations that are likely to lead to new violence.

- 2) We recommend that the city, in cooperation with religious and other community leaders, conduct a door to door canvass of every house in the city to urge residents to search for illegal guns in their homes and turn them in to the police through an amnesty program; provide information about requirements for safe storage of legal guns; and provide educational material that will help parents keep their children safe from guns in homes where they live and play, including playgrounds, schools, and other public places.
- 3) In cooperation with the BPS, health providers, and neighborhood groups, integrate an age-appropriate, evidence-based violence prevention curriculum for students K-12. Open Circle, a social and emotional learning curriculum, is now being implemented in 21 schools throughout the BPS system. These programs are grant funded and limited to grades K-8, serving only 7,000 of the system's 57,000 students. Expansion of the program to reach younger students combined with complementary curricula on conflict resolution for older youth will improve school climate and provide young people with the tools they need to lead peaceful lives. The effort should include citywide use of Youth Risk Behavior Surveys followed by zip code analysis to identify priorities for additional youth violence prevention activities where students say they are carrying or seeing guns or other signs of potential violence.
- 4) The BPS, in collaboration with other youth-facing public, private, and neighborhood groups should develop a focus on early identification, intervention, and counseling for children who display early signs of violent behavior and their parents.
- 5) In cooperation with community health centers and other providers, the city should integrate early screening and intervention for violence prevention as a routine part of pediatric and adolescent care in the city.
- 6) The BPHC street outreach and youth violence prevention programs should be expanded and integrated with neighborhood-based institutions that serve children and families. The BPHC has developed a continuum of

effective violence prevention strategies that engage different stakeholders within the city of Boston. This approach is grounded in supporting parents; reducing children's exposure to violence; teaching children about peaceful conflict resolution; creating positive opportunities for teens; addressing domestic and sexual violence; engaging residents in violence prevention; and intervening with at-risk youth and families. BPHC's street outreach and youth violence prevention programs include Partners Advancing Communities Together (PACT), VIAP, VIP, Start Strong, and the Defending Childhood Initiative. Expanding these efforts to include more settings and neighborhoods will ensure that Boston has an emphasis on prevention.

- 7) Health providers including hospitals, community mental health centers, and community health centers should collaborate to provide Boston police and other street level personnel with support to triage individuals in need of psychiatric intervention as a result of being a victim or witness to violence.
- 8) The city should enhance neighborhood-based partnerships to provide support to victims of violence. Boston has tremendous partners committed to preventing and addressing the root causes of violence and many are already working closely with the city to build trust and cohesion among residents. These partnerships can be leveraged to enhance existing supports for victims and survivors provided by BPHC's Trauma Response and Recovery Services. By training neighborhood-based teams to respond to traumatic incidents, not only will a larger number of residents be reached in more neighborhoods, but community-based

organizations will receive capacity-building support.

## DREAM

- 1) We strongly urge the mayor and all the city's leaders and partners to make every effort to build an effective alliance that can succeed in passing state and federal-level legislative and regulatory changes that reduce the number of illegal guns in the city. Massachusetts has the strongest laws in the nation, and one of the lowest overall rates of gun violence in the country. However, even these laws can and should be strengthened. The vast majority of guns that are used to commit crimes in Boston were purchased elsewhere. We need stronger regional and national laws to prevent murders in Boston.

## FOCUS 3: DEVELOP A ROBUST CITYWIDE HEALTH PLANNING STRATEGY TO CONTINUE TO BE THE HEALTHIEST CITY IN THE NATION

Although Boston is one of the healthiest cities in the United States, eliminating persistent health inequities and improving the overall health of all Bostonians calls for engaging the entire city in embracing a health agenda. We propose a structure different from prior health planning efforts to set specific

public health goals, secure action commitments from neighborhood groups and major health care providers, and measure and report progress toward these goals.

Health planning efforts at the state and regional level, mandated under the state health reform, are focused on health care facilities, services and costs, rather than the public health outcomes that are only partially related to direct medical services. The health planning group we recommend will be a forum for setting and measuring goals, but neighborhood groups and institutions will be responsible for implementing the programs and policies agreed to by this new entity.

Boston has one of the strongest health sectors in the country but our city's public health agenda has too often been determined by and subject to available funding streams, shifting political will, and levels of institutional interest. With a concentration of healthcare resources in certain areas of the city, there has been a distinct lack of attention to the health concerns of neighborhoods that lack these anchoring institutions.

We also recommend that the mayor create a Health in All Policies Task Force, whose role would be to work with all city departments to account for the public health impacts of new and existing programs.

## 1) CREATE A PUBLIC HEALTH PLANNING BOARD

### KEEP

- 1) Maintain the current BPHC's focus on reducing and eliminating health inequities, in which it has had measurable success and is a leader both locally and nationally.
- 2) Maintain the level of resources given to HIV and AIDs prevention that has made Boston a leader in reducing new and untreated infections.
- 3) Continue strong neighborhood-level data collection, evaluation, and reporting but develop action plans that engage residents, and public and private organizations/departments to inform the planning process and achieve specific public health goals.

### IMPLEMENT

- 1) We recommend that the mayor create a Public Health Planning Board that involves all key public and private representatives including neighborhood leaders, healthcare providers (including community health centers and academic medical centers), insurers, and state and local elected officials to develop, implement, and be held accountable for a coordinated city health improvement plan that reduces health disparities and mobilizes health sector resources and policies to achieve these goals.
  - a) To assure success, we recommend that the Public Health Planning Board be chaired by the mayor. Institutional members should be chief executive officers or at the CEO

level, not designees. We suggest that the BPHC coordinate the work of the Public Health Planning Board.

The Board should address health across the lifespan, from the youngest of Boston's residents to the elderly. Some cities have issued health equity scorecards and developed health equity strategic plans. A smaller number have launched health-planning councils. We are unaware of any that have established a public health planning board with an explicit focus of eliminating health inequities.

- a) Boston's health improvement plan should improve coordination among health providers to ensure that investments such as community benefit dollars and PILOT resources contribute to reducing health disparities and achieving health goals at the neighborhood level. To support these goals, the city could provide incentives to organizations that commit resources to meeting identified health improvement goals.

## DREAM

- 1) Develop an accountable mechanism for regional health planning that includes city, state, and private departments/organizations to identify and address regional public health problems.
- 2) Develop a dedicated funding stream for advancing the health of Boston, like a citywide health provider fund, to address public health disparities.

## 2) HEALTH AS PART OF ALL CITY DEPARTMENT POLICIES: ESTABLISH A "HEALTH IN ALL POLICIES" FOR

## CITY DEPARTMENTS AND CREATE A "HEALTH IN ALL POLICIES" TASK FORCE

Health considerations must be incorporated into decision-making across all of the city's departments including transportation, economic development, environment, housing, parks, and schools. They must also be made priorities by local social service organizations and community centers. Residents must be able to participate fully in these processes.

The "Health in All Policies" approach with its formalized process and oversight, would be consistent with a national movement toward formal methods for incorporating health equity into public decision-making. For example, Los Angeles has added a health and wellness chapter to the city's general plan, elevating health as a priority for the city's future growth and development. Washington, D.C. created a Health in All Policies Task Force to advance health equity among district residents.

## KEEP

- 1) Keep the existing policies/programs that enhance the health of the residents of the city of Boston such as:
  - a) "Complete Streets," established by the Boston Transportation Department, which ensures that all street redesign projects support walking, cycling, and public transportation use that is as safe and accessible as driving a car. This allows residents to incorporate physical activity into day-to-day travel.
  - b) The CleanAir CABS Initiative – resulting in a taxicab fleet that includes hybrid vehicles through a collaborative effort between



BPHC, Boston Police Hackney Division, the Office of Environment and Energy, MassPort, Boston taxicab companies, and residents which reduce the consumption of gasoline, tailpipe emissions, and decrease asthma and other respiratory problems.

- c) Increased availability of smoke-free housing across all sectors of the city's housing stock through collaboration among the Boston Housing Authority, Boston Redevelopment Authority, and Department of Neighborhood Development.
- d) A comprehensive district wellness policy adopted by the Boston Public Schools that includes access to sexual health information, designated minutes for physical activity, a healthy policy, and required education in tobacco and substance abuse prevention.

## IMPLEMENT

- 1) Create a "Health in All Policies" standard that requires all city departments to account for the individual and public health impact of new and existing programs and to adopt alternatives that have the most favorable impact on health.
- 2) Establish a Health in All Policies Task Force that would be charged with identifying priority programs, policies, and strategies across city departments to improve the health of the residents of Boston, while advancing the goals of creating sustainable communities, increasing the availability of affordable housing, improving infrastructure systems, and promoting public health. We recommend that such a task force be coordinated by the BPHC and include department heads from city departments including health, human services, development, transportation, environment,

housing, education, arts, police, policy, and public works. The Health in All Policies Task Force should also be encouraged to work with other city initiatives.

- 3) Implement training for all city department heads and key personnel on the social, economic determinants of health and the impact of city policies on these factors; promote efforts to include health impacts in planning and programs; provide training on ways to improve collaboration among agencies.
- 4) Adopt an "environmental justice" framework as part of the work of the Health In All Policies initiative. Environmental justice embraces the principle that all people have the right to be protected against environmental pollution and to live and enjoy a clean and healthful environment.
- 5) Support programs for city employees that improve their health, including work place wellness programs.

## DREAM

- 1) We envision publication of an annual report that describes and provides empirical data on how every department in the city has promoted public health.
- 2) We envision collaboration with the BPS and its partners to implement policies that focus on making the BPS system a model for improving the health of its students and employees. We envision a BPS that prepares increasing numbers of students for STEM careers, while promoting public health through such activities as extending evidence-based health curricula with proven outcomes in K-12; developing

expanded curricula for health-related areas including STEM and environmental science; and promoting health standards with measureable outcomes. Strengthening the BPS infrastructure will also help address acute and chronic health issues of Boston's children.

## Public Health Working Group

### Co-chairs

- Paula Johnson, Executive Director, Connors Center for Women's Health, BWH
- David Rosenbloom, Chair, Department of Health Policy & Management at BU SPH, Specializing in Substance and Alcohol Issues

### Members

- Dr. Joseph Betancourt, Director, Disparities Solution Center at Massachusetts General Hospital
- Michael Curry, Legislative Affairs Director & Senior Counsel, Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers
- Andy Davis, President, Carney Hospital
- Sherry Dong, Director of Community Health Improvement Programs, Tufts Medical Center
- An H. Duong, Health Policy Analyst, Center for Health Information and Analytics
- Philip Edmundson, Chairman and CEO, William Gallagher Associates
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- Gloria Fox, State Representative
- Elmer Freeman, Executive Director, Center for Community Health Education Research and Service; Director of Urban Health Programs and Policy, College of Health and Health Sciences, Northeastern University
- Barbara Gottlieb, MD, Physician, Community Health Center
- Larry Kessler, Director, Boston Living Center

- Manny Lopes, CEO, East Boston Neighborhood Health Center
- Dr. James Mandell, Attending Physician, Boston Children's Hospital
- Wanda McClain, Vice President for Community Health and Health Equity, Brigham & Women's Hospital
- John McGahan, President, Gavin Foundation
- Myechia Minter-Jordan, MD, President and CEO, The Dimock Center
- Joan Quinlan, Executive Director, Massachusetts General Hospital Center for Community Health Improvement
- Tricia Wajda, Director of Public Affairs, Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts
- Kate Walsh, President and CEO, Boston Medical Center

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- Alexander Gray, Jamaica Plain resident

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## Transportation & Infrastructure

Working Group  
Transition Team Report

April 16, 2014

Photos: Kit Pyne



Photos: Gary Battiston



Photo: Thomas Nally for A Better City



“What can Boston city government do—whether in partnership with others or by itself—to increase mobility in the city while preserving and improving the environment, economy, green space, and livability?”

## INTRODUCTION

The Transportation and Infrastructure Working Group was charged with evaluating the city’s transportation and infrastructure challenges and needs. Mayor-elect Martin J. Walsh asked the Transportation & Infrastructure Working Group “What can Boston city government do – whether in partnership with others or by itself – to increase mobility in the city while preserving and improving the environment, economy, green space, and livability?”

We have answered this question by exploring which policies, programs, or projects the Walsh administration should: 1) keep or expand; 2) could implement in the first 100 days of the administration with less than \$1 million in new funding; 3) dream to achieve.

Vision Statement: Transportation and



infrastructure affect every aspect of city living. They shape the physical form of the city, the nature and distribution of land uses, and economic activity. In addition, their policies, regulations, design, construction, and operations have deep implications for our quality of life, economic competitiveness, environment, social capital, and safety.

The Walsh administration's immediate objective should be to foster and implement policies that deliver the best possible transportation and infrastructure for every neighborhood. But that is not enough. Transportation can and should be transformative.

The Walsh administration should seize the opportunity to marshal the city's resources across disciplines, departments, and agencies to plan and implement a transportation system and related infrastructure that is safe, efficient, sustainable, balanced, accessible, equitable, and beautiful.

Working cooperatively with the legislature, state agencies, and surrounding cities and towns in a transparent and inclusive process, the mayor should accept the challenge to craft a visionary and transformative 21st century transportation and infrastructure plan that serves current and future generations, and will be a model of good practice for the nation.

## THE PROCESS

Throughout the transition team process, Boston residents from every neighborhood provided us with a wealth of information, research, and testimony. We are grateful for their willingness to engage in this open process and their dedication

to the improvement of their communities.

## THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Transportation and Infrastructure Committee recommends that the mayor set the following goals to move the city towards this vision.

1. **Increasing Public Safety with an Aim of Zero:** Traffic Deaths: Public safety must be the number one transportation and infrastructure goal. Boston will take proactive steps to improve public safety across the transportation system, bringing the number of traffic deaths among pedestrians, motorists, and bicyclists down to zero within ten years.
2. **Growing the Economy:** The City of Boston is an essential economic engine in Massachusetts. Nearly 700,000 jobs are within the city's limits, and that number is projected to increase in coming years. Boston has rebounded from the recession and is experiencing a period of rapid growth. The city's transportation and infrastructure policies and initiatives should capitalize on and accelerate these trends through targeted investments that promise significant return and effective collaboration with state and federal partners that can deliver critical resources to the city.
3. **Equity:** Boston should provide multiple, safe, reliable, and affordable transportation options to neighborhoods and residents who are physically isolated from the opportunities and services they need to thrive, including jobs, health care, and affordable housing. The city should prioritize investments, planning, and revenue options that significantly



reduce what low-income Boston residents pay for transportation. Transportation and infrastructure projects should provide opportunities for disadvantaged groups to gain access to good paying jobs, workforce training, and contracting opportunities without displacing current workers or businesses.

4. Increased Transit, Pedestrian, and Bicycle Mode Split: Boston will partner with and support the Massachusetts Department of Transportation in its efforts to triple the share of statewide trips made by public transit, bicycle, and walking by 2030.

5. Enhanced Capacity and Congestion Relief: Transit capacity is constrained in Boston and the region. Boston will be a strong leader, advocate, and coalition builder to ensure that the necessary resources and assets are in place to address the need for capacity enhancements and expansion. Technology applications and transportation systems management measures should be implemented to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of our transportation system.

6. “Infratechture”, Livability, and Social Capital: Boston will act to improve the public realm. Design of our transportation and infrastructure network will take into consideration urban design, landscape, public art, architectural, and behavioral design implications. Design practices will focus on improving public spaces, ensuring that our boulevards, sidewalks, and streets are attractive, usable, and welcoming to people of all ages and abilities while taking human scale into consideration and prioritizing place making.

7. Climate Change Mitigation and Resiliency: Over the long term, a significant threat to our city’s transportation and infrastructure network will be the impacts of extreme weather events caused by climate change. Recent projections indicate that Boston may experience between two and six feet of additional sea level rise between 2050 and 2100. Boston must continue to act to reduce its carbon footprint and prepare for the future impacts of sea level rise and other extreme weather events. Transportation policy should support the city’s goal of reducing its greenhouse gas emissions 25% by 2020 and 80% by 2050.

Transportation and infrastructure were key issues in the Boston's 2013 mayoral election, and for Mayor Walsh these issues will continue to play a critical role in the success of the administration. During the campaign, Mayor Walsh outlined his goals of accessibility, accountability, transparency, and collaboration.

- **Accessibility:** The Walsh administration has committed to an accessible transportation system for all residents of Boston, those who do business here, and visitors to our great city. The mayor will ensure Bostonians are an active, integral part of transportation policy planning.
- **Accountability:** The Walsh administration will make accountability a cornerstone of transportation planning. While the funds needed for transportation will often require state and federal support, Mayor Walsh believes that the ideas and innovations that will transform our transportation system will ultimately come from the residents of Boston. He believes that residents should be encouraged to contribute their ideas, and that the administration should be accountable for turning these ideas into action.
- **Transparency:** While developing transportation plan and policies, the Walsh administration will craft a transparent process that is readily understood by all residents, advocacy groups, business leaders, and all users and providers of transportation.
- **Collaboration:** Mayor Walsh will leverage his relationships within the state legislature to work with state and federal transportation agencies to secure the funding necessary to maintain and expand the transportation services in the

city. While collaborating with these entities, he will work with residents during transportation planning and project development to guarantee that their needs are addressed throughout the process.

## FOCUS 1: ACCESS AND MOBILITY

Access and mobility are the basic building blocks of the city's transportation network. Boston residents, commuters, and visitors should be able to reach jobs, schools, service providers, cultural and civic institutions, and should be able to choose between options without difficulty.

**Transit and Multi-Modalism:** Providing Boston residents with a safe and accessible transportation network will be crucial to achieving the mode share goal outlined above and reducing Boston's carbon footprint. Adding capacity to the system will not come from adding more roadways. Rather, increased capacity will rely on the expansion of alternatives to the automobile. To push Boston towards the day where using public transit, biking, and walking is as convenient and easy as using a car, we offer the following recommendations:

### KEEP

- 1) Continue the successful Hubway bike-share program in Boston.



- 2) Affirm the city's goal that 10% of Bostonians will bike to work by 2020.
  - 3) Continue active participation in the Massachusetts Ferry Compact to realize the full potential of water transportation.
  - 4) Keep the Boston Transportation Department's "Green Links" initiative moving forward in order to connect existing and proposed pedestrian and bicycle paths to each other and to neighborhood residents.
  - 5) Continue to develop plans to provide ferry connections to East Boston, Charlestown, South Boston, and Lovejoy Wharf/TD Garden.
  - 6) Advocate for continued MBTA late night service following the one-year pilot.
- ## IMPLEMENT
- 1) Boston should be welcoming to visitors and easy to navigate. Wayfinding tools should be improved throughout the city and the BTB should pilot signs that show "time to destination" alternatives on bike or foot.
  - 2) Re-time traffic signals for pedestrian safety and convenience, ensuring equity and consistency across the city.
  - 3) Implement lighter, quicker, cheaper fixes for street design to test and pilot improvements for walkers, cyclists, transit users, and drivers.
  - 4) Ensure snow removal is prompt and efficient across all of Boston's neighborhoods.
  - 5) Launch "Safe Streets" initiatives that provide enhanced safety education for seniors and youth around parks, schools, and public transit.
  - 6) Launch a "See and Be Seen" campaign to improve bike and pedestrian safety.



- 7) Identify the city's ten most dangerous intersections and aim to improve their safety by including infrastructure improvements and creating metrics to measure success.
- 8) Release a request for proposals (RFP) for an on-street and garage based point-to-point car share service.
- 9) Release a request for proposals (RFP) for installing real-time digital signage indicating the number of available parking spaces at large parking lots and garages.
- 10) Complete and fill in missing or inaccessible portions of the Boston HarborWalk.
- 11) Complete the South Bay Harbor Trail.
- 12) In conjunction with Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Boston Harbor Island Alliance, work to reduce the cost of Harbor Island ferry service for families.

## DREAM

- 1) Aspire to make Boston a city where residents of every neighborhood can access goods and services, and access downtown, medical, and university areas without owning a car.
- 2) Identify mobility management strategies to better coordinate the usage of Boston-owned vans and cars used to transport seniors, children, and people with disabilities.
- 3) Work with the MBTA to identify a location

within the city for at least one additional bus maintenance facility and opportunities for expansion of existing facilities. Current limitations on bus storage prevent proactive maintenance and increased service capacity.

- 4) Work with the MBTA, BRA, and developers to improve ADA accessibility at all stations.
- 5) Through ongoing public engagement and technical analysis, continue exploring the feasibility of cycletracks at the Public Garden, Malcolm X Boulevard, and Seaver Street.
- 6) Coordinate additional private shuttle bus services with the MBTA and explore mechanisms to open them to the general public.

## FOCUS 2: TRANSPORTATION DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION, AND MITIGATION

Reducing traffic deaths and positioning Boston as a city ready to receive visitors requires thoughtful design practices. Moreover, over one billion dollars of construction activity will occur in the region over the next several years. Boston's full engagement on these projects, many of which are state led, will be absolutely critical. To increase public safety and ensure large infrastructure projects proceed as smoothly

as possible, we encourage the administration to consider the following:

## KEEP

- 1) Maintain use of the Complete Streets methodology in planning street design.
- 2) Continue city participation in joint operations center meetings during critical state led projects.

## IMPLEMENT

- 1) Sign the Executive Order implementing Complete Streets on city projects, and appoint an Oversight Council to ensure implementation.
- 2) Learn from the Casey Overpass engagement process and use those lessons to inform future large infrastructure processes such as the reconstruction of the Bowker Overpass through Charlesgate in the Back Bay, and the Massachusetts Turnpike interchange in Allston.

## DREAM

- 1) Rank each street, A-E, in terms of priority for plowing and maintenance. This will foster increased transparency and allow residents to have an understanding of when their street will be paved, plowed, or repaired.
- 2) Form a Regional Incident Management Organization modeled on the TRANSCOM coalition of sixteen transportation and public safety agencies in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut.

- 3) Fund the city's existing bike network plan, including cycletracks or protected bike lanes, with an estimated annual cost of \$5 million.

## FOCUS 3: CONGESTION RELIEF

While our transit system requires significant expansion over the mid- to long-term, a significant number of Boston residents and visitors will continue to enter and travel throughout the city using cars. Traffic congestion is an inconvenience that increases travel time, consumes resources, increases pollution, and impacts both the economy and public safety. The Walsh administration should explore the following tools to relieve congestion and improve the flow of traffic throughout the city.

## KEEP

- 1) Keep and expand upon current efforts to retime traffic signals and target double parking in the major arteries throughout the city, known as the Critical Corridors Traffic Flow project.
- 2) Expand new "Time to Destination" signs recently launched in the Innovation District to the Longwood Medical Area and other high-density destinations.



## IMPLEMENT

- 1) Meet with city transportation leaders and transportation advocates locally and nationally to discuss the latest trends in mitigating congestion.
- 2) Commission a traffic congestion study of eight to ten main thoroughfares which run from the neighborhoods to downtown. The study would analyze whether improvements in signal timing and synchronization can improve traffic and shorten bus and car travel times while improving safety for bikes and pedestrians. This study should be coordinated with the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), and MPO funding should be sought through the Unified Planning Work Program.

## DREAM

- 1) Traffic Enforcement Safety Team: Create joint Boston Police Department and Boston Transportation Department team for targeted enforcement action, modeled on the Traffic Enforcement Safety Team (TEST) in Madison, Wisconsin.
- 2) Identify and remove geometric impediments that disrupt the flow of traffic unnecessarily.

## FOCUS 4: VISIONING AND PLANNING

While access and mobility





provide the foundation for getting Boston residents and visitors to their destinations, visioning and planning will help us set our priorities and outline a vision for the future of Boston's transportation network. Boston has not done a citywide transportation plan since 2000, and there are a series of other initiatives that should be undertaken as well. Comprehensive planning ensures that Boston will plan for its future and have clear priorities to guide future advocacy efforts. It will determine the next set of

comprehensive transportation investments for the city.

### KEEP

- 1) Keep using the Complete Streets guidelines in city construction projects.
- 2) Continue participation in the recently launched transportation master planning process for the South Boston Waterfront.

### IMPLEMENT

- 1) Launch a new, citywide Transportation Master Plan and an Urban Mobility Visioning Initiative to refresh the Citywide Transportation Master Plan created in 2000.
- 2) Assess the city's needs and assets.
- 3) Examine regional implications.



- 4) Study the city's social life and neighborhood connectivity.
- 5) Explore the needs for our growing senior population and people with disabilities.
- 6) Develop a list of priority transportation projects for the city and the greater Boston region to guide advocacy efforts at the state and federal level.
- 7) Create a "Vision Zero" campaign with a goal of zero road fatalities across all modes of transportation.
- 8) Consistently enforce existing demand management ordinances and policies.
- 9) Through Municipal Harbor Plans and Article 80 project reviews, seek to reduce project reliance on private vehicles and encourage alternative modes and more open spaces, view corridors, and green infrastructure.

## DREAM

- 1) Initiate a Mobility Management Plan to identify current Boston/MBTA/EEOHS/Council on Aging transportation services and future needs of Boston residents that are elderly, have disabilities, or are otherwise unable to drive or walk, and the steps needed to establish coordinated transportation services.
- 2) Launch a Transportation Harbor Plan to coincide with new ferry service.

## FOCUS 5: ZONING, PERMITTING, AND REGULATIONS

Zoning and permitting are essential regulatory tools for promoting transit oriented development and integrating transportation into the everyday lives of Boston residents. Additionally, these regulatory tools are crucial vehicles for promoting public safety, accessibility, and ensuring that Boston is a vibrant, attractive, and welcoming city.

## KEEP

- 1) Continue and expand upon revisions to zoning that promote Transit Oriented Development (TOD).
- 2) Keep transportation access plan agreements, strengthen their language, and increase enforcement.

## IMPLEMENT

- 1) Review existing practices and rules for private way repairs and identify opportunities for improvement.

## DREAM

- 1) Examine parking policies and rules, including

variable parking rates during peak hours.

- 2) Increase transparency in the approval of designated disabled parking spaces and create alternative parking options in densely populated blocks and neighborhoods with a high number of disabled parking spaces.
- 3) Pilot initiatives to reclaim parking lots and city streets as “open space” wherever possible. These can include open streets initiative events which reconfigure space with temporary planters, paint, chairs, and other items characteristic of open space.
- 4) Advocate for state legislation to provide municipalities the flexibility to make speed limit revisions. Research indicates that speed limits of 25 miles per hour on local roads can significantly reduce traffic related deaths and injuries.
- 5) Establish neighborhood slow zones that install traffic calming measures on selected streets to reduce accidents.
- 6) Streamline transportation access plan agreement development review process within Article 80, Air Pollution Control Commission permits, and green building zoning.
- 7) Create a commercial loading zone task force. Work with delivery companies and contractors to review and revise commercial loading rules, and include collaboration with the Massachusetts Motor Transportation Association on their concerns.

## **FOCUS 6: GOVERNANCE, GOVERNING, TRANSPARENCY,**

## **ACCESSIBILITY, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND EQUITY**

To achieve its transportation policy goals and objectives, the Walsh administration will need to dedicate considerable effort into the management of the Boston Transportation Department and to prioritizing transparency, accessibility, accountability, and equity in the department's operations and practices.

As subject matter experts and key stakeholders, we believe that these recommendations provide the appropriate approach to overseeing transportation policies, programs, and projects to obtain improved transportation outcomes in line with our common principles.

Administration and Service Delivery: The BTM Department is the primary city agency responsible for carrying out the mayor's transportation agenda on a daily basis. Therefore, its management team and organizational makeup should be at the top of the administration's priority list. As the administration begins making staffing decisions and contemplates the reorganization of city government, we urge consideration of the following:

### **KEEP**

- 1) Expand the use and integration of technology within the department.
- 2) Keep Boston's Office of Neighborhood Services

neighborhood liaisons and explore their potential collaboration with the Boston Transportation Department.

- 3) Retain the “Bike Czar” staff position.

## IMPLEMENT

- 1) Begin a national search for a new Transportation Commissioner.
- 2) Reestablish the Boston Transportation Department as the city’s consolidated and autonomous transportation agency.
- 3) The BTM should be reorganized, with the BTM Commissioner appointed as a cabinet chief, supervising public works and other relevant departments.
- 4) Reestablish position of Deputy Commissioner of Policy and Planning.
- 5) Appoint a Director of Safety within BTM.
- 6) Appoint a Director of ADA Accessibility.
- 7) Consider having one staff point person for each mode of transit: walking, biking, cars, public transportation, and freight.
- 8) Consider 3 potential department divisions: Long Range Planning, Short Range Planning, and Operations and Maintenance.
- 9) Identify funding to increase staffing levels at BTM.
- 10) Create and appoint a transportation advisory committee with membership representative of a wide variety of stakeholders. The advisory committee should immediately begin holding

a series of public forums to gather input from Boston residents.

- 11) Appoint a taskforce charged with recommending improvements in the taxicab industry. They should review the recently completed Nelson Nygaard report, and should include all stakeholders of the city’s cab industry, including Massport, both taxicab drivers’ associations, Lyft, Uber, and other emerging alternatives. The taskforce should examine the feasibility of removing the licensing and medallion administration from the Hackney Division of the Boston Police Department and locating the functions within a civilian commission. The report should examine London’s taxi redesign. In addition, we recommend establishing a goal to ensure that 50-75% of the city’s cab fleet is ADA-accessible and operates on alternative fuels.
- 12) Improve culturally-sensitive and linguistically appropriate mechanisms for accountability and public engagement in decision making, especially for historically disadvantaged communities.

## DREAM

- 1) Advocate for funding to create equity in transit and bus routes in underserved communities.
- 2) Advocate for funding to remedy the drought of non-auto projects serving Title VI neighborhoods and corridors.
- 3) Consolidate existing Neighborhood Commons, Playways, and Parklets programs under one umbrella, “Pavement to Parks,” and expand these successful programs.

## FOCUS 7: CITY BUILDING: TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Public health, delivery of basic city services, and the ability to withstand extreme weather events all depend on a first rate transportation network. Transportation options influence where people choose to live, shop, and work—shaping economic growth and opportunities across the city. We believe that these recommendations and options will help inform the ways in which transportation and infrastructure can be leveraged to further service delivery, improve sustainability, guide economic development, and firmly position Boston as a world class city.

Infrastructure for utilities, wastewater, and water quality: The essential partnership between the city and utility service providers keep Boston running each day and ensures that our roads are well lit and that our drinking water is clean and safe. This partnership has worked incredibly well in recent years. However, there is still room to deploy technology to modernize processes. Continued collaboration can also ensure that our roads, pipes, and other assets are repaired

as efficiently as possible, without unnecessary duplication of effort and expense.

### KEEP

- 1) Keep the structure of the Boston Water and Sewer Commission intact.
- 2) Keep the City of Boston Utility Coordination Software system and ensure coordination with existing city plans, such as the five-year bike plan.
- 3) Keep the utility emergency notification system.
- 4) Expand coordinated catch basin program.
- 5) Keep existing inflow and infiltration removal requirements.
- 6) Institute neighborhood permits to allow for utility operation in a larger area of the city.

### IMPLEMENT

- 1) Increase the transparency of the Public Improvement Commission, which regulates the city's infrastructure rights of ways.
- 2) Establish a Utility Advisory Committee to increase transparency and access.
- 3) Improve the coordination and installation of "green infrastructure" storm water management techniques with other infrastructure work.
- 4) Ensure that planned infrastructure improvements are made when utility and other repair work is being conducted.
- 5) Initiate a five-year assessment of the combined



sewer and overflow program.

## DREAM

- 1) Reform, upgrade, and enhance the street occupancy permitting process to allow for submission of online permit applications, as well as other efficiencies and improvements.
- 2) Explore financial incentives for utility companies to better coordinate their work and penalties for when coordination does not occur.
- 3) Explore innovative strategies to manage utility companies that neglect to execute planned infrastructure improvements during the course of their work.
- 4) Create a citywide fiber optic network and partner with all communications providers to deploy new broadband technology of all types to as many locations as possible.
- 5) Expand dog parks along city waterfront neighborhoods and enforce dog waste ordinances at beaches.
- 6) Work with Boston Water and Sewer Commission and MWRA to create a new tunnel connection to Chestnut Hill Reservoir.

## FOCUS 8: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Transportation and infrastructure are the key to economic growth and opportunity in every corner of the city.

Targeted investments have the ability to completely reshape neighborhoods and provide residents with access to jobs and newfound

mobility in their everyday lives. We ask that the administration consider the following recommendations to promote economic development in areas of Boston with significant growth potential, and connect our residents to new job and business opportunities.

## KEEP

- 1) Maintain focus on the Fairmount Line Corridor and opportunities for Transit Oriented Development, in both business and housing. Extensive work by community groups, the city, and the MBTA has led to major improvements in service quality and capacity. Continuing this success story will require joint efforts to maximize the benefit of these investments.

## IMPLEMENT

- 1) Initiate the creation of a Land Use and Transportation Plan to catalyze emerging land development areas, including Sullivan Square, Longwood Medical Area, Lower Roxbury, Newmarket Square, the Arborway Bus Yard, East Boston, and the Allston CSX Lot. This plan should identify transportation issues associated with each area, including MBTA overcrowding, accessibility, affordability, and equity issues in support of long range right of way, storage yard, and maintenance facility needs required for transit service.
- 2) Work with MassDOT, the Greenway Conservancy, philanthropists, and abutting properties to secure a long term financing strategy for the Rose Kennedy Greenway.

## DREAM

- 1) A jobs program should be developed that uses the Southwest Corridor Project and Denver's

WIN Initiative as models. This program would match Boston residents with the job, workforce development, and business opportunities associated with the current wave of construction activity. Both MassDOT and appropriate private sector employers should be involved in the design and operation of this effort.

- 2) When developers successfully receive zoning variances from the BRA to remove parking spots in Transit Oriented Development districts or for other reasons, recover some of the money saved for transportation improvements in the neighborhood.
- 3) Develop strategies to maintain affordability and mixed income housing and reduce and mitigate the negative impacts of gentrification following transportation improvements.

## FOCUS 9: INVESTMENT AND INNOVATION

The mayor should seize this window of opportunity to advocate for additional transportation funding and show the leadership needed to make investments today that will allow Boston to thrive tomorrow. Innovative approaches that make use of the latest available technology will also be critical to moving Boston's transportation network into the future.

The robust investments needed to fully propel

Boston into the 21st century will, of course, require significant resources from the city, but also the state and federal governments. In order to provide our transportation system with the needed resources over the long term, we recommend several investments that the city should make or maintain, as well as approaches to consider when seeking state and federal resources.

### KEEP

- 1) Keep the city's "Connect Historic Boston" initiative and keep the corresponding TIGER grants on schedule, while exploring the possibility of expanding the initiative to other neighborhoods, e.g. "Connect Historic Roxbury."

### IMPLEMENT

- 1) Leverage South Boston Waterfront Economic Development Industry Council and Massport development to advance the design of the Silver Line under D Street and freight rail to the Conley cargo terminal.
- 2) Support the MBTA in its development of full ADA Accessibility plan for all Boston stations, beginning with the Boston University-led redesign of Commonwealth Avenue.
- 3) Advocate for a voluntary MBTA "U-Pass" program for all Boston-area college students, funded by the universities.
- 4) Enforce parking restrictions in MBTA bus stops to improve service quality and reliability.
- 5) Review the current transportation bond bill under consideration in the state legislature and MassDOT's five year capital plan. This

opportunity to include projects in the rolling five year capital investment plan occurs annually and new transportation bond bills are typically enacted every two years. Mayor Walsh should advocate for funding for high priority projects via Boston's two seats on the MPO, and through outreach to the legislature and MassDOT. In particular, the Walsh administration should advocate for the following priorities to be funded in this year's transportation bond bill and MassDOT's five year capital plan:

- 6) Additional funding for the expansion of South Station.
- 7) Planning funding for the advancement of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)/Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) service options.
- 8) Funds to ensure that the MBTA fleet is maintained in a state of good repair.
- 9) Additional funds for MBTA power and signal upgrades.
- 10) Funding to advance the design and engineering of Silver Line Phase III, Silver Line under D Street and the Red/Blue Connector.
- 11) Funding to procure new Green, Red and Silver Line vehicles, and for a mid-life overhaul of existing Red and Silver Line vehicles.
- 12) Funding for the planning of bus maintenance facility expansion.
- 13) Funding for bus fleet expansion.

## DREAM

- 1) Review and evaluate the downtown parking

scheme, investigating parking ratios, parking pricing, and variable meter pricing. Explore the opportunity to use any additional parking revenue to fund public transit.

- 2) Create fully integrated smart traffic calmed streets (see Complete Streets Guidelines) across all neighborhoods of the city.
- 3) Explore the feasibility of both city and privately financed and operated bus service to supplement the MBTA along key corridors.
- 4) Create a citywide infrastructure bank or advocate for a statewide infrastructure bank.
- 5) Advocate for long-term investment in specific projects including: The Urban Ring, Red/Blue Connector, South Station Expansion, Silver Line Phase III, expansion of the Silver Line under D Street, truck route improvements, intersection and corridor Improvements, BRT advancement, DMU service or "Fast Track" Rail, and expanded water transportation.
- 6) Explore some of the following finance strategies and their potential utility for transportation improvements in Boston: Tax Increment Financing, District Infrastructure Financing, Infrastructure Cubed, the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act, the institution of designated assessment areas, and exploring parking revenue opportunities.
- 7) Advocate for legislation that would allow toll revenue to be used to fund public transit.

## FOCUS 10: TECHNOLOGY

### Deploying the latest technology

will help Boston address capacity challenges. BTM has already deployed innovative approaches to relieving congestion in the South Boston Waterfront, and those initiatives should be expanded to other parts of the city. Technology, coupled with a significant data collection effort, can help the city develop performance measures that improve accountability and communication with the public.

## KEEP

- 1) Keep and expand smart parking sensors already utilized in the South Boston Waterfront to other high-density locations.
- 2) Build off of existing public engagement platforms, such as Citizens Connect, to increase reporting of service needs.

## IMPLEMENT

- 1) Begin a robust data collection initiative. This initiative would include timely crash reports submitted to MassDOT to access potential federal highway improvement funds. This should incorporate data from BPD as well as EMS and hospital emergency departments throughout the city, and should be a collaborative effort between the Boston Public Health Commission and the BTM. This initiative should include additional self-reporting opportunities, including Boston Bikes data from their self-reporting app on bike accidents. This data should also be used to address dangerous

intersections and other design issues that impact public safety.

- 2) Using this enhanced data collection, improve performance management through the Boston About Results system, working with city performance management staff and BTM staff to develop performance metrics for the goals and objectives mentioned throughout this report.

## DREAM

- 1) Develop a “Boston On The Go” mobility smartphone application that can be used seamlessly between MBTA, Hubway, parking, and car share services.
- 2) Create a Data and Technology division within the BTM.

## FOCUS 11: BOSTON AS A REGIONAL PARTNER AND LEADER

As the Massachusetts state capital, Boston plays a central role in transportation throughout the region. Our transportation systems, however, are not wholly under our jurisdiction, and partnerships with the federal government, state government, neighboring municipalities, regional planning associations, and other stakeholders are essential to advancing the



city's needs and priorities. The transportation and infrastructure team has taken note of the relevance of these partnerships at each of our public hearings and internal meetings.

## KEEP

- 1) Maintain and increase involvement with state agencies, Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), Metropolitan Mayors Coalition, and the Massachusetts Municipal Association.

## IMPLEMENT

- 1) Foster strong relationships with bordering cities to enable coordinated planning and advocacy for transportation and transit project planning and funding.
- 2) Coordinate with the MBTA on:
  - a) Signal prioritization for light rail and bus routes.
  - b) Funding and planning for new vehicle maintenance yards and the potential to expand existing facilities.
  - c) Bus stop consolidation.
  - d) Piloting of off-board fare collection for buses.
  - e) Initiate an independent analysis of the transportation impacts of proposed casino sites. Work with all relevant parties to

seek mitigation and direct responses to the impacts of neighboring casinos on the transportation system and services of specific neighborhoods as well as the Greater Boston region. This mitigation should also include specific measures to address issues pertaining to trash and street cleanliness.

- f) Insist on efficient use of federal funds and collaborate to seek additional resources.
- g) Convene Mayors along the Northeast Corridor (NEC) to advocate for improvements.

## DREAM

- 1) The MBTA is expected to raise fares by an average of 5% in July 2014. The mayor should advocate for improved service for Boston as part of this process.
- 2) Enlist universities, the business community, and others to create a Center for Transportation Excellence and Sustainability.
- 3) Convene a strategic planning group with surrounding communities to address funding and coordination of metro-area projects under a Bridges to Boston Regional Compact.
- 4) Advocate for funding and planning work to create a bus rapid transit network with signal priority throughout the MBTA's footprint.
- 5) Work with MBTA, MassDOT, and Boston Bus Rapid Transit Study Group to fund advanced BRT service in Boston.
- 6) Obtain MPO support for the city's priority projects.

- 7) Sign an agreement or potential memorandum of understanding (MOU) with MassDOT to implement bus priority signaling on city streets.
- 8) Establish a transportation curriculum to train future Boston Public Works/Boston Transportation Department/MassDOT/MBTA employees at Boston's vocational and technical high schools modeled after Cardozo High School in Washington DC. Partner with MassDOT/MBTA to build a transportation school modeled after schools in NY and DC.
- 9) Support the MBTA in its efforts to identify funding needed to make all MBTA stations within Boston ADA accessible.

## FOCUS 12: PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERS

### KEEP

- 1) Keep and expand efforts to display public art, such as Ashmont Station's Sleeping Moon Sculpture, in open spaces and around transit stations and bus stops.

### IMPLEMENT

- 1) Formalize partnerships with existing Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) to implement demand management strategies in key economic areas, such as A Better City (ABC), the Medical, Academic, and Scientific Communities Organization (MASCO), and Seaport TMA; and support future development of TMAs in economic growth areas like Allston/Brighton and South Bay.

- 2) Work with and support disability advocacy organizations and other transportation advocacy organizations that provide the city with technical design guidelines and expertise for transportation and development projects.

### DREAM

- 1) Explore the potential use of developer mitigation requirements, including fees, for transportation investments. Suffolk Downs' casino mitigation agreement or New Balance's investment are relevant recent examples of these requirements.

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## Youth

Working Group  
Transition Team Report

April 16, 2014

Photos: Kit Pyne







“What can Boston city government do—whether by itself or in partnership with others—to ensure that all of the city’s youth are on a positive path leading toward a productive future?”

## INTRODUCTION

With more than one-third of the city’s population comprised of people under the age of 24 years old, Boston’s youth community is multi-layered and diverse. The issues facing young people in the city are widespread, often translating to policy across various facets of city government and local organizations.

Mayor Walsh asked the Youth Working Group, “What can Boston city government do – whether by itself or in partnership with others – to ensure that all of the city’s youth are on a positive path leading toward a productive future?”

## THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The following report presents recommendations

for addressing the needs and leveraging the assets of Boston's youth by focusing on:

- 1) Youth Voice and Engagement: Supporting youth civic engagement and leadership, as well as obtaining their voice in the democratic processes of the city;
- 2) Healthy Communities for Healthy Youth: Ensuring comprehensive well-being for youth in the city, addressing public health and safety issues;
- 3) Positive Educational and Employment Pathways: Ensuring youth have access to meaningful educational and workforce development opportunities.

At the heart of these recommendations is the hope that all young people in Boston have equal access and opportunities to succeed. To achieve this goal, the Walsh administration should increase interagency collaboration throughout city government and work with public, non-profit, and private sector partners to help Boston's youth excel and remain on a positive path toward a productive future.

## **FOCUS 1: YOUTH VOICE AND ENGAGEMENT**

Mayor Walsh is committed to expanding opportunities for youth "to participate in civic issues and have a voice in changing their city" (Walsh Youth Policy Paper,

2013). In order to empower youth to be leaders, we recommend that the city continue to use currently effective vehicles and tools for developing youth leadership, while expanding on others to engage the large and diverse youth population in deeper and more meaningful ways.

To create comprehensive youth policy, identify gaps in service delivery, ensure the quality of youth services, expand resources, and implement the youth-led initiatives that are specified in Mayor Walsh's goals for arts and culture, education, health, public safety, and work force development it is necessary to coordinate activities between city agencies and community-based organizations

### **KEEP**

1. Mayor's Youth Engagement Initiatives: The Mayor's Youth Council and Youth Participatory Budgeting Process: The Mayor's Youth Council offers a platform for youth to express their opinions and share fresh ideas. We have an opportunity to expand and enhance this program in the near future (also see "Implement"). Boston is the first city in the country to engage youth in a participatory budget process. The city should continue this process beyond fiscal year 2014 to maintain a youth voice in the funding of capital budget projects, as well as other aspects of local policy decision-making.



2. Youth Representative On Boston School Committee: As the City of Boston evaluates education policy for Boston Public School students, maintaining and expanding student representation on this governing body is critical and necessary for increasing youth voice and engagement (also see “Implement”).

3. Support for Youth Civic Engagement Programs: The City of Boston needs to maintain its support of youth programs that promote civic engagement. In particular, the Boston Youth Fund should continue to provide crucial summer and year-round job slots for youth leadership groups. Boston Rocks funding should continue to support youth to engage their peers and neighbors in city-owned spaces. The Mayor’s OneIn3 Advisory Council should also be continued.

## IMPLEMENT

1. Expand the Mayor’s Office Youth Engagement Vehicles:

1.1. The Mayor’s Youth Council (MYC):

The MYC is a national model for youth engagement, yet not enough people in Boston know about its work. Implementing a strong marketing and outreach strategy will inform residents, increase representation and engagement, and allow for the MYC and its initiatives to reach potential youth participants. In addition, structuring the MYC to include formal quarterly meetings with the mayor will provide concrete mechanisms for increased youth input, while increasing awareness of the MYC’s function and value to both youth and adult constituencies. In addition, the MYC can improve its connection with

youth who struggle with challenges such as chronic school failure, court involvement, drug addiction, etc.

1.2. Youth Summit: An Annual Youth Summit should be established. In addition, the MYC should provide a more than annual platform for youth to voice their concerns across a wide range of policy areas, similar to the Open Town Meeting and Public Hearings led by Mayor-elect Walsh's transition team. It is critical that the MYC receive technical support to train young people to plan and implement such summits, facilitate dialogue and decision making processes, and to write and deliver effective speeches.

2. Strengthen Youth Representation In the Boston Public School Decision-Making Bodies: Youth representation needs to be strengthened on the School Committee, providing more diversity among those represented (e.g., gender, exam/non-exam schools, ELL/ native English speaker, etc.). Further, youth represented should have voting power on the School Committee, which will move the current youth seat from a place of symbolic power to an official voice on this governing body. The city should have youth representatives on the search committee for Boston's new superintendent.

3. Increase Programming for Middle School Aged Youth: Middle school is an important transition time for young people, which is why two key services for middle school youth should be expanded in the city: civic leadership and positive enrichment programs. First, students should not have to wait until high school to express their views and opinions; programming should be provided for middle school students to enhance their civic leadership skills. Second,

programming and resources should be increased for middle school students who may be struggling so that they can get on a positive path, avoiding negative outcomes like risky sexual activity or street violence. To support both of these initiatives, the city should partner with organizations that are already successfully engaged and supportive of young people, close the gap of valuable resources, and improve the promotion of these community and enrichment programs.

4. Boston Youth Commission: To enhance the quality of life for Boston's youth, the city should re-evaluate its organizational structure for youth-related services and programming. Through a proposed Youth Commission or existing city office, this office should have primary responsibility to oversee the implementation of youth policy; facilitate collaboration and communication with and among youth service providers and programs; improve the coordination of resources; oversee the city's youth engagement initiatives; and ensure that youth-led initiatives are integrated into the efforts of other city departments, including those in arts and culture, education, and work force development,. Models such as Boston's Elderly Commission and San Francisco's Youth Commission should be explored when considering the infrastructure, purpose, and goals of the Boston Youth Commission.

## DREAM

1. Boston Centers for Youth and Family (BCYF): The BCYF facilities are severely underutilized. Centers should be both a hub for youth in their respective neighborhoods and a connector for





youth to programming across the city. With existing infrastructure in place, BCYF should be the hub for most health, athletic and wellness activities for Boston youth. For example, BCYF can implement a model similar to the New York City “Mayor’s Cups” as a way to use sports to join the various neighborhoods of that city in friendly athletic competition. Finally, in addition to the programming offered by BCYF staff, the centers should be open to programming from partnering community-based organizations and should play a key role in encouraging youth participation in city-wide activities like the MYC Annual Summit.

2. Develop an Ethnic Studies Curriculum: With 85% of Boston Public School (BPS) students of Latino, African American or Asian ethnicity, it is critical to modernize the history curriculum to reflect the student population. Knowing their history as well as the histories of other people of color will allow students to have more cultural pride and be more culturally aware. BPS should convene a curriculum committee to do an ethnic

studies pilot project with the long-term goal of including ethnic studies in every school.

3. Implement a Culturally Responsive Youth Outreach and Engagement Strategy: The City of Boston needs a marketing and outreach strategy for youth that connects young people and the adults in their lives to the various opportunities, services, and supports available in the city. Further, those who, on behalf of the city, work with and engage youth should reflect, embrace, and celebrate the various cultures and identities of Boston’s young people.

## FOCUS 2: HEALTHY COMMUNITIES FOR HEALTHY YOUTH

Youth violence and destructive behavior patterns have reemerged in Boston, creating a group of young people who are traumatized and isolated, academically marginalized, and vulnerable to exposure and involvement in crime, drug addiction, sexual abuse, prostitution, and severe emotional and social challenges.

Research demonstrates the need to invest in strategies that are designed to positively impact peer culture so that youth engage positively in their education, their community, and their own futures. The City of Boston has an opportunity to reevaluate which resources and

programming have been successful and which have not, to promote healthy, safe and successful communities.

## KEEP

1. Programming for LGBTQ Youth: Even as Massachusetts has been a leader in working for equality, LGBTQ youth continue to face unique challenges as they often fight to be accepted in their homes, schools, and the broader society. The city should continue to support community-based programs that create safe spaces for LGBTQ youth and make space for their voices in the broader health and youth development agendas.
2. Supports for High Risk Youth: While there are many young people thriving in Boston, there are others who struggle with issues such as drug addiction, chronic school failure, or court involvement. The city should maintain programs like the Streetworker program, which is aimed at supporting these youth, and continue to use funding like Shannon Grants to support community organizations serving this population.

## IMPLEMENT

1. Strengthen Promotion of Community Health Centers and Peer-to-Peer Counseling: All community health centers should be engaged in a citywide approach to public health and public safety efforts. In particular, the city should increase and promote peer-to-peer counseling, in which young people share public

health information concerning drugs, sexuality, and violence, and positive behavior. Portions of the funding available through Safe & Successful Youth Initiative, violence prevention support available through the Department of Public Health, and the Shannon Grant programs should support expanded efforts to engage high risk youth in public health education and peer-based violence prevention efforts community based agencies, health centers, and BCYF programs as partners.

2. Support and Enhance the City's Trauma Services: Youth who experience trauma are at a greater risk of hurting themselves and others. In the city of Boston, there is impressive but understaffed infrastructure for addressing traumatic incidents like homicides or fires, but there is not enough ongoing mental health support for youth who are in crisis. If the city expands its trauma supports and institutes effective follow up services, the city may prevent more young people from engaging in violence or risky behavior in the future.

## DREAM

1. Establish Youth-Led Safe and Cultural Spaces:
  - 1.1. Promote Safe Cafes at Community Centers: Concerns around youth violence have caused many organizations to refrain from holding youth social events. The city and youth-serving organizations must partner to create safe spaces for youth to socialize. Talent shows, open mics, dance parties, and other safe and supervised social events decrease the need for young people to identify unsupervised spaces to socialize where drug use, inappropriate sexual

activity, and violence are much more likely to occur. As part of this effort, the city should encourage the 37 community centers located strategically throughout Boston neighborhoods to provide the physical space for ongoing, regular teen social activities.

- 1.2. Redevelop The Strand Theatre: The Strand Theatre presents an opportunity to develop a nationally recognized theatre that offers safe spaces for youth, provides vehicles for youth voice and engagement, expands culture and art in the city, and promotes meaningful and year-round employment for youth.
2. Incorporate Youth into Boston Police Academy and In-Service Training: All new recruits to the Boston Police Academy as well as all current officers should receive community police training to improve relationships between youth and police. This training should be ongoing, to raise awareness among youth and police about their common interests and maintain a shared sense of responsibility that protects the rights and dignity of youth and ensures the safety of all Boston residents.

### **FOCUS 3: ENRICHING EDUCATIONAL AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

The City of Boston must invest in enriching educational and employment programs that support a positive future for today's youth. Many programs exist that reach the full spectrum

of youth and the city should continue to support them. There are also new ideas that should be implemented inside and outside the classroom to advance each child's educational and career opportunities.

#### **KEEP**

1. Partnerships for College Access Programs: In order to increase the number of youth who pursue and complete college, young people need to have access to college campuses to understand what they need to do to succeed academically and to access necessary college financial aid. The city benefits from many partnership and mentoring programs that create pathways to college, such as programs at local public colleges.
2. College and Career Pathways for English Language Learners: To ensure equal access to competitive college access and workforce development programs, it is critical to maintain partnerships with existing programs in the city that support Boston's growing population of English Language Learners (ELLs) and provide culturally sustaining programming to youth who are increasingly multicultural and multilingual. In addition to maintaining these programs, there is also an opportunity to align resources from the city and the school district to support these programs.

## IMPLEMENT

1. Advocate for Youth Employment among Boston Companies: While the City of Boston has consistently funded the Mayor's Summer Jobs Program, there is an opportunity to increase private sector engagement to expand employment opportunities for young people. Every summer, 4,000 out of the 14,000 youth who apply for summer jobs are left unemployed. The Walsh administration should encourage the 350 private companies with more than 100 employees who do not currently hire youth to hire young people during the summer and throughout the year. Employment for youth should offer connections to growing vocational fields in the city and state.
2. Expand Partnerships with Community-Based Organizations for Academic Credit: BPS should expand its partnerships with organizations and programs so that students may obtain academic, arts, athletics, and civics credits through their participation in community based organizations and institutions of higher education. Making this a citywide opportunity will increase engagement among youth in their communities, and relieve BPS from the responsibility of providing these critical educational experiences, which are currently limited.
3. Advocate for MBTA Youth Passes: With over one-third of Boston's youth not able to afford MBTA passes, the mayor should advocate with the state's Department of Transportation for free or low-cost MBTA passes for youth up to 21 years of age. Mayor Walsh should partner with existing coalitions and the MBTA to research, develop, and implement a Youth Pass program.. Transportation access will enable

youth to attend after-school/vacation programs, artistic and athletic experiences, employment and other opportunities, all of which lead to healthier and safer communities.

4. Provide Books for Homework and Study: Many public school students across the city are not allowed to bring home their books to study; in some cases, if a student brings home a book from school it is considered stealing. Every effort should be made to address this most basic of educational needs as soon as possible. If, however books cannot be purchased in the short term, it should be mandatory for all schools to provide electronic and printed copies of the most recent and relevant school materials.
5. Create the Boston School Equity Task Force: In October, Mayor Walsh agreed to establish a Boston Equity Task Force to examine and promote standards of equity for all publically-funded schools in the city. This task force should include representatives from youth groups in Boston, teachers, parents, and leaders from exam, non-exam, and charter school from around the city.

## DREAM

1. Improve the Boston Youth Fund for Youth Employment: First, the Boston Youth Fund should expand to better meet demand for summer jobs. City funding should be increased to support 1,000 more young people each summer. The Boston Youth Fund should be also be expanded to include youth ages 14 to 19, and should provide as many young people as possible, especially those older youth with



year round employment opportunities. Youth employment can provide a powerful mechanism to engage youth as partners in working to support community peace and stability. By expanding the program, the city should also consider job opportunities for disconnected youth, at-risk youth, and non-Boston Public School students who may be seeking alternative education. Additionally, the BYF job placement should mirror that of the job market. The program should be structured so that youth are screened and selected by the participating agencies and departments to ensure a fit between their skills and the vocational goals of the participating youth. Furthermore, the city's employment program should be structured to allow youth to stay with the same organization over time rather than limited to the selected summer. This consistency will enable young people to develop their skills and long term relationships with employers to boost self-esteem, understand real world life skills, and identify a long-term vocational pathway.

2. **Coordinate School and Community Center Partnerships:** Boston is rich in its resources and potential for partnerships with the array of colleges and organizations in the city. Unfortunately, some schools have stronger partnerships with colleges and organizations than other schools; some, do not have any meaningful partnerships at all. Organizations find it challenging to navigate school bureaucracy in order to bring services to young people. Every school and BCYF facility should be expected to have at least one major partnership that provides in-school or out-of-school time support. This would require BPS and BCYF to create a portfolio of partners so that schools and community centers can

form meaningful partnerships that match their capacity, mission, interests/focus and leadership style. To move this forward, the engagement department at BPS should conduct focus groups with potential partners and develop a marketing campaign to increase partnerships. BCYF should create a partnerships position or department within its existing structure.

3. **Increase Alternative Education Pathways and At-Risk Student Supports:** Many young people are not able to get through the traditional four year high school structure. Boston has seen a dramatic decrease in its dropout rate in part due to the establishment of alternative education programs which help young people to get back into a supportive educational environment. While Boston must continue to make its traditional high schools more supportive, the city should double the number of alternative education slots to support youth who struggle in traditional education settings, particularly those between 18 and 24 years old.
4. **Expand Arts Programming:** All schools should offer a rich variety of music, arts, and cultural programming that takes place both during and after school. The arts have the capacity to reach, engage, and retain students, to improve academic outcomes and to help close the achievement gap. Leveraging the city's strong partnerships can potentially help move BPS towards this goal.
5. **Expand the Civics Curriculum to All High Schools:** In 2013, Boston launched a civics pilot to educate youth on how to become engaged citizens. This curriculum should be evaluated, strengthened, and expanded districtwide. Additionally, the district should continue to engage youth leadership

organizations to support an out-of-school component that allows young people to participate in action projects in their communities.

## Youth Working Group:

### Co-chairs

- Ilyitch Nahielly Tabora, Director of the Talented And Gifted Latino Program and Hispanic Writers Week, Institute for Learning and Teaching, UMass Boston
- Mariama White-Hammond, Executive Director, Project HIP-HOP

### Members

- Carlos Rojas Álvarez, Campaign Coordinator at the Student Immigrant Movement (SIM); Education Policy Associate at Youth on Board (YOB)/ Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC)
- Melissa Colón, Doctoral Student, Eliot-Pearson Department of Child, Tufts University Research Analyst, Tufts Interdisciplinary Evaluation Research (TIER), Tufts University
- Dan Cullinane, State Representative
- Joanne Gomes, Student
- Long Lin, Youth Staff, Chinese Youth Initiative
- Mike Loconto, Associate Director of Labor and Employee Relations, Harvard University; Board Member, West Roxbury MainStreets
- Julia Mejia, Civic Engagement Specialist
- Lilibeth Pimentel, Staff Member, MassCOSH
- Kyron Owens, Youth Advisor
- Huong Phan, Paralegal, Greater Boston Legal Services, Vietnamese Youth Community Leader, Dorchester Organizing and Training Initiative, Asian American Resource Workshop
- Stanley Pollack, Executive Director, Center for

### Teen Empowerment

- Charlotte Golar Richie, Former State Representative
- Charlie Rose, Senior Vice President and Dean, City Year, Inc.
- Vanessa Snow, Manager of Organizing and Policy Initiatives, Hyde Square Task Force
- Bob Scannell, President and CEO, Boys and Girls Clubs of Dorchester
- Jose Valenzuela, President, Boston Youth Wrestling

### Staff Support

- Lauren Jones, Boston resident

Organizational titles and affiliations are provided for identification purposes only.